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ABSTRACT

The "ERIC Review" announces research results, publications, and new programs relevant to each issue's theme topic. This issue focuses on school safety and violence prevention. An introductory section includes two articles: "How Safe Is My Child's School?" (Kevin Mitchell) and "Making America's Schools Safer" (U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley). Section 1: Understanding School Violence, contains the following articles: "The Effects of Violence on Young Children" (Marilyn S. Massey); "Television Violence: Content, Context, and Consequences" (Amy Aidman); "Bullying in Schools" (Ron Banks); "Girls and Violence" (Jeanne Weiler); and "Warning Signs of School Violence" (Kevin Dwyer, David Osher, and Cynthia Warger). In Section 2: Preventing School Violence, articles include: "School Violence Prevention" (Dean Walker); "Schools as Community Learning Centers" (U.S. Department of Education); "Safety by Design" (Don Blue); "Schoolwide Behavioral Management Systems" (Mary K. Fitzsimmons and Cynthia Warger); "Improving Ethnic and Racial Relations in the Schools" (Harriett D. Romo); "Conflict Resolution in Schools" (Conflict Resolution in Schools Network); "Father Involvement in Schools" (Christine Winquist Nord); and "Evaluating School Violence Prevention Programs" (Daniel J. Flannery). Section 3: Initiatives and Resources, includes the following articles: "Federal Support for Improving School Safety" (Kevin Mitchell); "Model Programs" (U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Justice); "School Safety Resources" (Kevin Mitchell); and "Searching the ERIC Database on School Safety and Related Topics" (Kevin Mitchell). One article concludes the issue: "Putting It All Together: An Action Plan" (U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Justice). (AEF)

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SCHOOL SAFETY: A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT

Securing the Future

IR020286

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The vast majority of schools in the United States are safe places for children to learn and grow. Most injuries that occur at school result from accidents, not violence, and most school crime is theft, not violent crime.[1] In addition, U.S. schools are becoming even safer. Between 1993 and 1997, the overall school crime rate for students ages 12–18 declined, and the percentage of high school students carrying weapons or engaging in physical fights on school property decreased significantly.[2]

Notwithstanding this encouraging news, the recent school shootings in the United States have clouded the public's perception of school safety. Many parents wonder whether their children will be victimized by school violence. Many educators question the adequacy of their school's security measures. And if the trend that displayed itself during the first half of the 1990s has continued in the same direction, many children feel less safe at school now than they did in the past.[3]

This issue of *The ERIC Review* focuses on school safety and violence prevention. Its purpose is to provide an overview of the nature and extent of school violence; to describe some of the collective steps that parents, teachers, students, and communities can take to create safer schools; and to provide resources for readers who want more indepth information. Most of the articles appearing in this issue were originally published as ERIC Digests. These brief overviews of education topics support the issue's broad-based approach to school safety and violence prevention.

The issue begins with an article that presents the latest statistics on school violence and describes the characteristics that many safe schools have in common. This article is followed by an inspirational message from U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley that challenges everyone to help make schools safer. *Section 1: Understanding School Violence* begins with an article that describes the effects of violence on young children and another that describes the effects of television violence on children of all ages. Other articles address the often-overlooked problem of bullying in schools and the generally misunderstood world of girls' delinquency and crime. The section closes with a description of the warning signs of school violence. *Section 2: Preventing School Violence* opens with an article that highlights violence prevention in the context of improving school climate through the combined efforts of the entire community. This theme is echoed in the remaining articles, which describe schoolwide behavioral management systems, techniques for improving ethnic and racial relations in schools, and ways to increase father involvement in schools. The section closes with a discussion of the vital role that program evaluation plays in the development and implementation of successful school safety plans. *Section 3: Initiatives and Resources* begins with an article that summarizes many federal programs and initiatives that support the improvement of school safety. The remainder of this section includes examples of model school safety programs and a school safety resource list that contains organizations, online federal documents, and other federally sponsored resources. The issue concludes with steps that parents, educators, business and community leaders, and students can take to improve school safety.

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[1] U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Justice. 1999. *1999 Annual Report on School Safety.* Washington, DC: Authors. (Available online at http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/SDFS/news.html)

[2] See footnote 1.

[3] Between 1989 and 1995, the percentage of children ages 12–19 who reported feeling less safe at school rose from 6 percent to 9 percent. Source: U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Justice. 1998. *Annual Report on School Safety, 1998.* Washington, DC: Authors. (Available online at http://www.ed.gov/pubs/AnnSchoolRept98)

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ACCESS ERIC Director: Lynn Smarte
Managing Editor: Kevin Mitchell
Consulting Editor: Carol Boston
Graphic Artist: Annie Pardo
Copy Editor: Bonnie Speary Devore
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Introduction

How Safe Is My Child's School?

Kevin Mitchell

The relatively recent string of school shootings in the United States has left many parents wondering whether their children are safe at school. Such horrific events flash brilliantly but briefly on the screen of media attention and leave parents, as well as teachers and students, with a frightening image of schools as violent, dangerous places. This is most unfortunate, because the vast majority of America's schools are safe.

The *1999 Annual Report on School Safety* [U.S. Department of Education (ED) and U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), 1999] provides a more complete and accurate picture of today's school environment.

- Most school crime reported by students is theft, not serious violent crime.[1]
- Children ages 12–18 are almost three times as likely to be victims of serious violent crime when they are away from school than they are at school or while going to or from school.
- The overall school crime rate for children ages 12–18 declined slightly from 1993 to 1997.
- The percentage of students in grades 9–12 who reported carrying a weapon (for example, a gun, club, or knife) to school declined from 1993 to 1997.

This information is encouraging, but schools are not crime free. During the 1996–97 school year, 47 percent of all public schools reported to police the occurrence of at least one less-serious violent crime (physical attack or fight without a weapon) or nonviolent crime (theft or vandalism), and an additional 10 percent reported at least one serious violent crime (ED and DOJ, 1998).

School crime rates appear to be associated with grade level and school size. During the 1996–97 school year, elementary schools were much less likely than either middle schools or high schools to report any criminal incidents. Moreover, larger schools, especially those with enrollments of 1,000 or more students, exhibited higher crime rates than smaller schools (ED and DOJ, 1998).

School crime affects teachers as well as students. Like their pupils, teachers are more likely to be victims of theft than of any other crime. Each year from 1993 to 1997, teachers were victimized at an average rate of 53 thefts and 31 violent crimes[2] for every 1,000 teachers. During the same period, teachers in urban schools were more likely to be victims of violent crime than those in rural or suburban schools (ED and DOJ, 1999).

What Factors Contribute to School Violence?

Although recent school shootings demonstrate that violence can occur anywhere, schools tend to reflect the nature of their surrounding communities. As a result, the factors that contribute to violence in the schools mirror those that contribute to violence in the greater community: racism, drug abuse, access to weapons, child abuse and neglect, inadequate parenting, unemployment, and exposure to violence in the media, among others (National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1993). The higher crime rates typically associated with impoverished urban neighborhoods put many urban schools especially at risk for crime.

Do Students Feel Safe at School?

Although the overall school crime rate declined slightly from 1993 to 1997, the percentage of students who reported that they felt less safe at school

Kevin Mitchell is Co-Editor of *The ERIC Review* and a writer/editor for ACCESS ERIC in Rockville, Maryland.

increased. From 1989 to 1995, the percentage of students ages 12–19 who reported that they feared being attacked or harmed at school rose from six percent to nine percent, the percentage of students who reported that they feared being attacked while traveling to and from school rose from four percent to seven percent, and the percentage of students who reported that they avoided certain places in the school (for example, hallways, stairwells, and bathrooms) for safety purposes rose from five percent to nine percent (ED and DOJ, 1998).

Given that school violence is actually declining, why should the education community be concerned about students' perceptions of school safety? The awareness, threat, or experience of school violence can result in a growing sense of fear, and fear erodes the academic environment. Children who continuously expend energy to defend themselves against real or imagined dangers have difficulty learning (Wallach, 1994). Under similarly stressful conditions, teachers may become less effective in the classroom or leave the profession altogether.

What Are Schools Doing To Improve School Safety?

Ironically, certain measures designed to improve school safety may, in some cases, create a school atmosphere that is detrimental to the learning process. For example, teachers and students may consider the presence of metal detectors, security cameras, and security forces unsettling, especially if they perceive these measures as symbols of failed efforts to enhance school safety.

Consequently, many schools are looking for ways to improve school safety that not only instill a sense of security in students, teachers, and parents but also involve them in the planning process. Safe-school strategies include

- Identifying and assisting violent, aggressive students in early childhood.
- Establishing conflict resolution programs.
- Establishing or extending before- and afterschool programs.
- Establishing and enforcing schoolwide behavior policies.
- Increasing parent involvement in their children's education.
- Encouraging businesses and other community organizations to play a more active part in school activities.
- Recruiting mentors to act as role models and show students the connection between academic achievement and gainful employment.
- Encouraging architects to design schools that positively influence human behavior and discourage criminal activity.

Many of these strategies are described in the articles in section 2, beginning on page 18.

What Do Safe Schools Have in Common?

School safety depends heavily on the interest that parents, teachers, students, and other community members show in creating an environment that is conducive to learning. According to *Early Warning, Timely Response: A Guide to Safe Schools* (Dwyer, Osher, and Warger, 1998), effective school violence prevention and intervention strategies are most successful in school communities that

- Focus on academic achievement.
- Involve families in their children's education.
- Develop links to the community.
- Help children develop positive relationships with staff and with one another.
- Discuss safety issues openly.
- Treat students with equal respect.
- Create ways for children to express their concerns safely.
- Have a system for referring children who are suspected victims of neglect or abuse.
- Offer before- and afterschool programs.
- Promote good citizenship and character.
- Identify potential safety problems and assess progress toward solutions.
- Help children make the transition to adult life and the workplace.

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Notes

[1] Serious violent crime includes homicide, suicide, rape/sexual battery, physical attack with a weapon, and robbery (stealing by force).

[2] Violent crime includes rape/sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, and simple assault.

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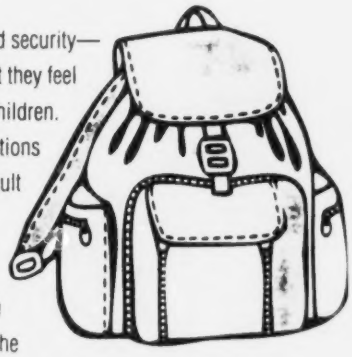
Making America's Schools Safer

U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley

Courtesy U.S. Department of Education

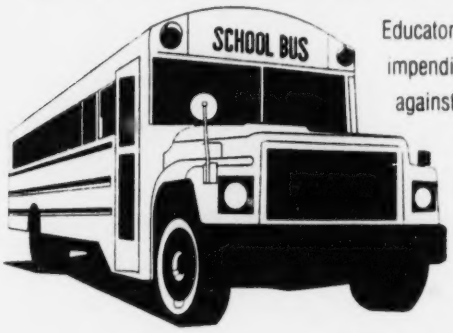
The recent school tragedies that took place in Oregon, Pennsylvania, Arkansas, Kentucky, Mississippi, and Colorado have made an indelible mark on the minds and hearts of all Americans. Yet, it is important to remember that 90 percent of our schools are free of serious violent crime and that less than 1 percent of all homicides among school-aged children (ages 5–19) occur in or around our public schools. This is a credit to our communities and to the care and vigilance they have shown, and continue to show, in keeping our schools safe. But any school crime is too much. Although our schools are among the safest places for students to be on a day-to-day basis, I ask those Americans who look nostalgically back to another time to stand with us in the present and help us make our schools even safer.

What can we do to make our schools safer? First, I ask all Americans to believe as I do in our young people. Today's youth may differ from us in dress and in musical tastes, but they are not a lost generation. They are an ambitious and striving generation, and we must remain hopeful and positive in helping them come of age in a responsible manner.



Moreover, in this time of concern, we must send our young people a powerful message of hope and security—that we will do everything we can to protect them, to listen to them, and to reach out to them so that they feel connected. This is why I ask parents again and again to slow down their lives and tune in to their children. We need to break the silence and start talking to our children, not just asking them superficial questions such as "How was your day?" and "How was school?" Given our busy schedules, this may be difficult at first, but let's realize what is really important—let's listen to what our children are trying to tell us about their lives and their concerns.

As the father of 4 children and the grandfather of 10, I know that communicating meaningfully with children and especially with teenagers is not always an easy task. Teenage years, characterized by the powerful pull of independence and identity formation, are difficult. This is a fact of life that every parent of a teenager understands. Even the many parents who work very hard to stay connected with their teenagers find it an uphill battle. However, I ask parents not to give up. Remember that you are the adult. Don't be afraid to give your children direction and to set reasonable limits. Listen hard to those quiet asides that teenagers often use to tell you what is really going on in their lives.



Educators and school officials can help make schools safer by remaining vigilant for signs of impending acts of violence, and we must support them in their efforts to take tough action against anyone of any age who seeks to disturb the tranquility of our nation's schools. I also ask the young people of America to say something when trouble is brewing. In the aftermath of most of the recent school shootings, we have learned that many students thought that something was about to happen just before the violence occurred. I encourage our young people to talk to an adult about their concerns. It may save lives.

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Making America's Schools Safer (continued)

In addition, we need to help teachers and educators create an environment where every young person feels valued—where no young person feels left out or isolated. This is a very difficult task, given the large student population. But we must rise to the challenge and make it happen.

We must also do a better job of preparing America's teachers for the modern classroom. For first-time teachers, success can be a real struggle. Even the best teachers acknowledge the challenges that arise from inadequate preparation. For example, a Teacher of the Year recently told me, "I'm a good teacher, but I've 'lost' scores of kids over the years—not because I didn't care, not because I didn't try, and not because I didn't rework my curriculum to make it more meaningful to youth. I lost these kids because I didn't have the expertise and the ability and the time to give them what they needed."

Educators also tell me time and again that they simply need more counselors and other adults connecting with their students. Many school districts have peer counseling and character education courses, and many go out of their way to help young people who are struggling with real-life issues such as parental divorce and teenage pregnancy. But we need to do a better job of establishing student support services, including mental health services, in our schools. In this time of prosperity, surely all of us at the local, state, and federal levels can find a way to ensure that every student feels that he or she is connected to some caring adult in our schools.

Finally, we need to help students get beyond stereotypes and learn to respect one another. American education must include a strong focus on building the character and integrity of our young people, helping them learn right from wrong, and teaching them to appreciate student differences and to reject doctrines of hate.

Our nation's schools are committed to teaching our children and to helping them grow up to be responsible and civic-minded individuals. I believe that America's public schools are doing a good job in this regard, but they can do better still if we move forward together to confront violence and eliminate it from our schools.

—Adapted from "Safe Schools, Healthy Schools" (speech made by U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley at Walt Whitman High School in Bethesda, Maryland, on April 30, 1999).

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What causes school violence? Does violent television programming make children more aggressive? Is bullying really a big deal? What makes girls turn to violence? In answering these and other questions, this section of "The ERIC Review" highlights the concept that to prevent school violence, one must understand it. The first four articles trace the origins of school violence to the environments in which children are raised, discuss the harmful effects of violence on developmental and educational outcomes, and suggest ways that parents and educators can create environments in which children learn to solve problems nonviolently. Because early intervention is not always successful, the final article describes the warning signs that typically precede a violent school incident.

The Effects of Violence on Young Children

Marilyn S. Massey

Violence is now perceived as a public health issue, and there is much evidence to illuminate its harmful effects. Every day, 10 American children are murdered, 16 die from gunshot wounds, 316 are arrested for crimes of violence, and 8,042 are reported to be abused or neglected (Children's Defense Fund, 1997). In 1997, more than 3 million children were reported as victims of child abuse and neglect to child protective agencies in the United States, and an estimated 1,196 children died as a result of child abuse and neglect (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1999). Of these children, approximately 77 percent were three years old or younger at the time of their death.

This article describes the effects of violence on young children and suggests ways that caregivers, parents, and teachers can reduce the damaging effects of violence.

The Early Years

Even before a child is born, violence can have a profound effect on his or her life. Studies show that battered pregnant women often deliver low-birth-weight babies who are at great risk for exhibiting developmental problems (Prothrow-Stith and Quaday, 1995). The shaking of an infant or child by the arms, legs, or shoulders can be devastating and result in shaken baby syndrome, which can include irreversible brain damage, blindness, cerebral palsy, hearing loss, spinal cord injury, seizures, learning disabilities,

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This article is adapted from the ERIC Digest *Early Childhood Violence Prevention*, by Marilyn S. Massey.

Marilyn S. Massey is Assistant Professor of Health Education at Texas Tech University in Lubbock, Texas, and serves as Chair of the American School Health Association's Council on Early Childhood Health Education and Services.

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and even death (Poussaint and Linn, 1997). The growing body of knowledge regarding early brain development suggests that "the ways parents, families, and other caregivers relate and respond to their young children, and the ways that they mediate their children's contact with the environment, directly affect the formation of neural pathways" (Shore, 1997, p. 4).

Psychological Effects

Violent children usually come from violent homes, where parents model violent behavior as a means of resolving conflict and handling stress (Page and others, 1992). Even if children are not physically abused themselves, they can suffer psychological trauma—including the inability to bond with caregivers—from witnessing battering. Attachment or bonding has far-reaching implications not only for the child's emotional well-being but also for his or her cognitive development, ability to cope effectively with stress, and ability to develop healthy relationships (Lerner, 1992). Children who witness violence can display an array of emotional and behavioral disturbances, including low self-esteem, withdrawal, nightmares, self-blame, and aggression against peers, family members, and property (Peled, Jaffe, and Edleson, 1995).

Violence and Learning

Research shows that chronic exposure to violence adversely affects a child's ability to learn (Shore, 1997; Prothrow-Stith and Quaday, 1995; Kurtz, Gaudin, and Wodarski, 1994; Lorion and Saltzman, 1993). Learning itself is an essential tool for violence prevention (Prothrow-Stith and Quaday, 1995). Children who achieve in school and develop important reading, critical-thinking, problem-solving, and communication skills are better able to cope with stressful and perhaps dangerous situations.

In addition, academic achievement enhances the development of positive self-esteem and self-efficacy, both of which are necessary for experiencing emotional well-being and achieving success. The relationship between violence and learning is particularly significant because cognitive skills are crucial in terms of academic success, self-esteem, coping skills, and overall resilience. Interventions must begin early to help children develop higher-order thinking skills, empathy, impulse control, anger management, peaceful conflict resolution skills, and assertive communication techniques.

What Can Parents Do To Prevent Violence?

Children learn from what they see. To prevent violence, parents need to model appropriate ways to manage problems, conflict, anger, and stress. Parents and other caregivers can help children learn to deal with emotions without using violence, and they can practice specific strategies to prevent violent behavior.

The American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Psychological Association (1995) provide the following suggestions to help parents and other caregivers reduce violence:

- Give children consistent love and attention. Every child needs a strong, loving relationship with a caring adult to feel safe and secure and to develop a sense of trust.
- Ensure that children are supervised and guided. Children learn important social skills by interacting with others in well-supervised activities. Unsupervised children often have behavioral problems that can lead to violence.
- Model appropriate behaviors. Children learn by example. Discuss problems with them and help them learn to resolve conflicts nonviolently.
- Do not hit children. Physical punishment sends the message that it is acceptable to hit others to solve problems. Nonphysical methods of discipline help children deal with their emotions and teach them peaceful ways to handle problems and conflicts.
- Be consistent with rules and discipline. Children need structure to learn appropriate behaviors. State clear, logical consequences for not following the rules.
- Make sure children do not have access to firearms, even if unloaded. Teach children about the dangers of firearms and the steps to take if they find a gun.
- Try to keep children from seeing too much violence in the media. Limit television viewing time, and talk with children about the violence they see in movies, on TV, and in video games. Help them understand how painful violence is in real life, and discuss its serious consequences.
- Teach children ways to avoid being victims of violent acts. Stress personal safety to children, including what to do if anyone tries to hurt them and how to call 911.
- Take steps to keep the community safe. Stay involved with family, friends, and neighbors, and take pride in the community.

What Can Educators Do To Prevent Violence?

Teachers and directors of preschools and child-care centers have an opportunity to specifically address violence prevention in early childhood. There are numerous violence prevention methods that can make a difference in the lives of parents and young children. The following are some workable ideas:

- Offer parenting classes that address effective parenting methods and child development.
- Conduct training for parents, expectant parents, and people who work directly with young children. Discuss life skills, including specific violence prevention skills (for example, empathy, gentle touch, anger management, impulse control, conflict resolution, and setting and enforcing limits); stress management and positive coping techniques; problem-solving skills; and communication methods.

- Provide educational opportunities to prevent shaken baby syndrome. Show parents and caregivers how to recognize their emotional "triggers" (when they feel they are about to lose control), and teach them anger management and coping techniques for self-control.
- Send home tip sheets or include tips in family newsletters that deal with topics related to violence prevention. A list of parenting resources and hotline numbers also can be included.
- Teach children at an early age that feelings are normal, even feelings of anger or hurt. Stress that violence, however, is not an acceptable method for expressing anger, frustration, and other negative feelings.
- Be a vigilant, positive role model.

Conclusion

Behavior is shaped by conditions in the environment. The way children are treated within their primary environments largely determines how they behave. As a result, all Americans are stakeholders in the quest to prevent violence in the critical early years. All children deserve the opportunity to "fly" and reach their highest potential—they must not become "hidden casualties."

Source

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Television Violence: Content, Context, and Consequences

Amy Aidman

Social science research conducted during the past 40 years supports the conclusion that violent television programs have negative consequences for young viewers. The research suggests that televised violence can harm children by causing them to (1) learn aggressive behaviors and attitudes, (2) develop fearful or pessimistic attitudes about the real world, and (3) become desensitized to real-world and fantasy violence.

This article reports recent findings on violent television content, highlights the recently developed television ratings system, and offers suggestions for parental guidance and mediation of children's viewing of television programs.

How Is Television Violence Defined?

The 1994 *National Television Violence Study* (NTVS), the largest study of media content ever undertaken, defines television violence as "any overt

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This article is adapted from the ERIC Digest *Television Violence: Content, Context, and Consequences*, by Amy Aidman.

Amy Aidman is Project Manager for the National Parent Information Network Illinois (NPIN Illinois) and Research Associate for the ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education in Champaign, Illinois.

The Impact of Televised Violence

"There can no longer be any doubt that heavy exposure to televised violence is one of the causes of aggressive behavior, crime, and violence in society. The evidence comes from both the laboratory and real-life studies. Television violence affects youngsters of all ages, of both genders, at all socioeconomic levels and all levels of intelligence. The effect is not limited to children who are already disposed to being aggressive and is not restricted to this country."

—Taken from Eron, L. D. "The Impact of Televised Violence." Testimony on behalf of the American Psychological Association before the Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs. *Congressional Record*, June 18, 1992 (p. 1).

depiction of a credible threat of physical force or the actual use of such force intended to physically harm an animate being or group of beings. Violence also includes certain depictions of physically harmful consequences against an animate being or group that occur as a result of unseen violent means" (Center for Communication and Social Policy, 1998, p. 18).

The three-year NTVS, funded by the National Cable Television Association, assessed the amount, nature, and context of violence in entertainment programming; examined the effectiveness of ratings and advisories; and reviewed televised antiviolence educational initiatives.

Is All Television Violence the Same?

All television violence is not the same. Certain portrayals of violence are considered high risk for children and should be evaluated by parents when judging the possible program effects. Portrayals in which the perpetrator is attractive are especially high risk because viewers may identify with the character. Other high-risk portrayals include those in which violence is glamorized, sanitized, justified, graphic, realistic, or routine.

Although some violent content can convey an antiviolence message, U.S. television typically sanitizes, glamorizes, or even glorifies violence. NTVS results show that from 1994 to 1997, an average of less than five percent of programs analyzed (232 of nearly 5,000 programs) had a strong antiviolence theme (Center for Communication and Social Policy, 1998). Final NTVS results also show, on average, that approximately 60 percent of programs analyzed contained some violence.

In addition, NTVS findings indicate that high-risk portrayals of violence abound in U.S. broadcast and cable television. On average across the three years of the study, approximately 39 percent of all violent acts were committed by attractive characters; for 73 percent of violent acts, the perpetrators were not penalized and showed no remorse; and 55 percent of violent incidents did not show the suffering of the victim. In approximately 40 percent of the violent programs, the "bad guys" were not punished.

Can the Effects of Television Violence Be Predicted?

Based on reviews of social science research, it is possible to predict some of the effects that specific portrayals of television violence can have on children.

Aggressive Behavior

Learning aggressive behaviors and attitudes is predicted to increase when the violence is justified, graphic, extensive, or realistic; when the perpetrator of violence is attractive; when conventional weapons are present; or when the violence is rewarded or presented in a humorous fashion. Conversely, the learning of aggression is inhibited by portrayals in which the violence is unjustified, the perpetrators are punished, or the painful results of violence are shown.

Fearful Attitudes

Learning fearful attitudes about the real world is predicted to increase when the violence is unjustified, graphic, extensive, or realistic; when the victims of violence are attractive; or when the perpetrators of violence are rewarded. Some research suggests that heavy viewers of violent content believe their world is meaner, scarier, and more dangerous than do their lighter-viewing counterparts (Gerbner and Gross, 1980). When violence is punished on television, the expected effect is a decrease in fearful attitudes about the real world.

Desensitization

In this context, desensitization refers to the development of a tolerance to violence. It is predicted to occur when children are repeatedly exposed to extensive, graphic, or humorous portrayals of violence, and it is therefore a potential long-term effect for heavy viewers of violent content. Given that some of the most violent programs are children's animated series in which violence is routinely intended to be funny and in which realistic consequences of violence are not shown, desensitization and its long-term effects are of special concern with respect to children.

Do All Children React to Television Violence in the Same Way?

Just as television violence varies, children vary in their reactions to television violence. Characteristics such as age, experience, cognitive development, and temperament should be considered individual factors that can affect how children react to violent content. Very young children, for example, have an

understanding of fantasy and reality that is different from that of older children and adults. They may be more frightened by fantasy violence because they do not fully understand that it is not real. Therefore, when parents consider their children's viewing, both age and individual differences should be taken into account.

Using Television Ratings As Guidelines

As a result of the Telecommunications Act of 1996, a ratings system has been developed by the television industry in collaboration with child advocacy organizations. It is currently in use by some of the networks. Ratings can also be used in conjunction with the V-chip, a device that can be programmed to block selected programming electronically.

Ratings categories are based on a combination of age-related and content factors (see the box on page 11). These ratings may help parents determine what is appropriate for their children to watch. However, ratings may make programs appear more attractive to some children, possibly creating a "forbidden fruit" appeal. Furthermore, critics point out the potentially problematic nature of having the television industry rate its own programs. These critics support the development of alternative rating systems by nonindustry groups.

Beyond Ratings: What Can Parents Do?

As a parent, you can reduce television's negative effects on your child by using the following guidelines:

- Watch television with your child. Not only does this provide you with information about what he or she is seeing, but active discussion and explanation of television programs can increase your child's comprehension of content, reduce stereotypical thinking, and increase prosocial behavior.
- Turn off disturbing programs. If a portrayal is upsetting, simply turn off the television and discuss your reason for doing so with your child.
- Limit your child's television viewing. Set an amount of time for daily or weekly viewing (suggested maximum is two hours per day), and select programs that are age appropriate.
- Use television program guides or a VCR. Television program guides can help you plan and discuss viewing with your child. A VCR is useful for screening programs, building a video library for children, pausing to discuss points, and fast-forwarding through commercials.
- Encourage your child to be critical of messages he or she encounters when watching television. Talking about television violence gives children alternative ways to think about it. Point out differences between fantasy and reality in depictions of violence, and help your child understand that, in real life, violence is not funny. Discussion of issues underlying what is on the screen can help children become critical viewers.

Source

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Resources

Center for Media Education (http://www.cme.org)

Center for Media Literacy (http://www.medialit.org/index.html)

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Television Guidelines for Parents

Audience Labels

TV-Y: Directed at Younger Children (ages 2–6)

This program is designed for a very young audience, including children from ages 2–6. Note: Not all TV-Y shows are violence free. There is no content rating to let parents know whether a TV-Y show contains violence.

TV-Y7: Directed at Older Children (ages 7 and older)

This program may be more appropriate for children who can distinguish between make-believe and reality. Themes and elements in this program may include mild fantasy or comedic violence or may frighten children under the age of 7. Note: Programs in which fantasy violence (FV) may be more intense or more combative than in other programs in this category are designated TV-Y7-FV.

TV-G: General Audience

Although not designed specifically for children, this program contains little or no violence, no strong language, and little or no sexual dialogue or situations.

TV-PG: Parental Guidance Suggested (may be unsuitable for young children)

This program contains one or more of the following: moderate violence (V), some sexual situations (S), some coarse language (L), or some suggestive dialogue (D).

TV-14: Parents Strongly Cautioned (children ages 14 and older)

This program contains one or more of the following: intense violence (V), intense sexual situations (S), strong coarse language (L), or intensely suggestive dialogue (D).

TV-MA: Mature Audience Only (ages 17 and older)

This program contains one or more of the following: graphic violence (V), explicit sexual activity (S), or crude indecent language (L).

Content Labels

Television guidelines may have one or more of the following letters added to the basic rating to let parents know when a show contains higher levels of violence, sex, adult language, or suggestive dialogue:

V	Violence
S	Sexual situations
L	Coarse or crude indecent language
D	Suggestive dialogue (usually means talk about sex)
FV	Fantasy violence

—Adapted from Eisenstock, B., and K. Borum. 1999. *A Parent's Guide to the TV Ratings and V-Chip*. Washington, DC: Center for Media Education; Menlo Park, CA: Kaiser Family Foundation. (Available online at http://www.vchipeducation.org)

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Bullying in Schools

Ron Banks

Bullying in schools is a worldwide problem that can have negative consequences for the general school climate and for the right of students to learn in a safe environment without fear. Bullying can also have negative lifelong consequences—for both bullies and their victims. Although much of the formal research on bullying has taken place in Scandinavia, Great Britain, and Japan, the problems associated with bullying have been noted and discussed wherever formal schooling environments exist.

What Is Bullying?

Bullying comprises teasing, taunting, threatening, hitting, stealing, and other direct attacks that are initiated by one or more students against a victim. In addition to direct attacks, bullying can be indirect—for example, by causing a student to be socially isolated through intentional exclusion. Although boys typically engage in direct bullying methods, girls who bully are apt to use more indirect, or subtle, strategies, such as spreading rumors and enforcing social isolation (Ahmad and Smith, 1994; Smith and Sharp, 1994). Whether bullying is direct or indirect, its key component is physical or psychological intimidation that occurs repeatedly over time to create an ongoing pattern of harassment and abuse (Batsche and Knoff, 1994; Olweus, 1993).

Extent of the Problem

Various reports and studies have established that approximately 15 percent of K–12 students are regularly either victims or initiators of bullying behavior (Olweus, 1993). The latest information[1] indicates that during the 1992–93 school year, 12 percent of students in grades 6–12 were bullied[2] (U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Justice, 1999).

Direct bullying seems to increase through the elementary school years, peak in the middle school/junior high school years, and decline during the high school years. However, although direct physical assault seems to decrease with age, verbal abuse appears to remain constant. School size, racial composition, and school setting (rural, suburban, or urban) do not seem to be distinguishing factors in predicting the occurrence of bullying. Finally, boys engage in bullying behavior and are victims of bullies more frequently than girls (Batsche and Knoff, 1994; Nolin, Davies, and Chandler, 1995; Olweus, 1993; Whitney and Smith, 1993).

Characteristics of Bullies and Victims

Bullies seem to have a need to feel powerful and in control. They appear to derive satisfaction from inflicting injury and suffering on others, seem to have little empathy for their victims, and often defend their actions by saying that their victims provoked them in some way. Studies indicate that bullies often come from homes where physical punishment is used, where children are taught to strike back physically as a way to handle problems, and where parental involvement and warmth are frequently lacking. Children who regularly display bullying behaviors are generally defiant or oppositional toward adults, antisocial, and apt to break school rules. In contrast to prevailing myths, bullies seemingly have little anxiety and possess strong self-esteem. There is little evidence to support the contention that bullies victimize others because they feel bad about themselves (Batsche and Knoff, 1994; Olweus, 1993).

Victims of bullies are typically anxious, insecure, and cautious and suffer from low self-esteem, rarely defending themselves or retaliating when confronted by students who bully them. They may lack social skills and friends, and they are often socially isolated. Victims tend to be close to their parents and may have parents who can be described as overprotective. The major defining physical characteristic of victims is that they tend to be or appear to be physically weaker than their peers. Other physical characteristics, such as weight, dress, or poor eyesight (necessitating eyeglasses), do not appear to be significant factors that can be correlated with victimization (Batsche and Knoff, 1994; Olweus, 1993).

Consequences of Bullying

As established by studies conducted in Scandinavian countries, a strong correlation appears to exist between engaging in bullying as a child and experiencing legal or criminal troubles as an adult. In one study, 60 percent of those characterized as bullies in grades 6–9 had at least one criminal conviction by age 24 (Olweus, 1993). Chronic bullies seem to maintain their behaviors into adulthood, which diminishes their ability to develop and maintain positive relationships (Oliver, Hoover, and Hazler, 1994).

Victims often fear school and consider it to be an unsafe and unhappy place. As many as seven percent of America's eighth graders stay home at least once a month because of bullies. Victimization tends to increase some students'

This article is adapted from the ERIC Digest *Bullying in Schools*, by Ron Banks.

Ron Banks is User Services Coordinator for the ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education in Champaign, Illinois, and Information Specialist for the Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) Early Childhood Research Institute.

isolation because their peers do not want to lose status by associating with them or do not want to increase the risk of being bullied themselves. Being bullied leads to depression and low self-esteem, problems that can extend into adulthood (Olweus, 1993; Batsche and Knoff, 1994).

Perceptions of Bullying

A number of studies reveal interesting information regarding how students perceive the causes and outcomes of bullying and how they react to bullying around them. For example, a survey conducted in the Midwest found that a clear majority of students believe that victims are at least partially responsible for bringing the bullying on themselves (Oliver, Hoover, and Hazler, 1994). Students surveyed tended to agree that bullying toughens a weak person, and some felt that bullying "teaches" victims appropriate behavior. Another study found that students consider victims to be "weak," "nerds," and "afraid to fight back" (Charach, Pepler, and Ziegler, 1995). However, 43 percent of the students in this study said that they try to help the victim, 33 percent said that they should help but do not, and only 24 percent said that bullying is none of their business.

Parents are often unaware of the bullying problem and talk about it with their children only to a limited extent (Olweus, 1993). Student surveys reveal that only a small percentage of students seem to believe that adults will help. Students feel that adult intervention is infrequent and ineffective and that telling adults will only bring more harassment from bullies. Students report that teachers seldom or never talk to their classes about bullying (Charach, Pepler, and Ziegler, 1995). School personnel may view bullying as a harmless rite of passage that is best ignored unless verbal and psychological intimidation cross the line into physical assault or theft.

Intervention Programs

Bullying is a problem that occurs in the social environment as a whole. The bully's aggression occurs in social contexts in which teachers and parents are generally unaware of the extent of the problem and in which other children are either reluctant to get involved or simply do not know how to help (Charach, Pepler, and Ziegler, 1995).

Given this situation, effective anti-bullying interventions must involve the entire school community rather than focus on the perpetrators and victims alone. For example, some researchers emphasize the need to develop schoolwide bullying policies, implement curricular measures, improve the school grounds, and train students in conflict resolution, peer counseling, and assertiveness techniques (Smith and Sharp, 1994). To read about a highly successful intervention approach, see the box on this page.

Conclusion

Bullying is a serious problem that can dramatically affect the ability of students to progress academically and socially. A comprehensive intervention plan that involves all students, parents, faculty, and staff is required to ensure that all students can learn in a safe and fear-free environment.

No Bullying Allowed

Olweus (1993) details an antibullying program that involves interventions at the school, class, and individual levels. Schools that have implemented this program have reported a 50-percent reduction in bullying. It includes the following components:

- **An initial schoolwide questionnaire** that is distributed to students and adults. The questionnaire helps justify intervention efforts, helps students and adults become aware of the extent of the problem, and serves as a benchmark to measure the impact of improvements in school climate once other intervention components are in place.
- **A schoolwide parental awareness campaign** that can be conducted during parent-teacher conference days, through parent newsletters, and at PTA meetings. The goal is to increase parental awareness of the problem, point out the importance of parental involvement for program success, and encourage parental support of program goals. An important part of the campaign involves making parents aware of the results of the initial schoolwide questionnaire.
- **A classroom program** that includes a list of rules against bullying that teachers and students develop together. Many programs engage students in a series of formal role-playing exercises and related assignments that can teach alternative methods of interaction to students directly involved in bullying. These programs can also show other students how they can assist victims and how everyone can work together to create a school climate where bullying is not tolerated (Sjostrom and Stein, 1996).
- **Individual interventions** for bullies and victims.

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Notes

[1] Note: Data from the 1999 *National Household Education Survey* were not available at the time of publication.

[2] Includes physical attack and robbery.

Girls and Violence

Jeanne Weiler

Girls' involvement in delinquency and crime, though still less than boys', appears to have increased significantly in the past two decades. There is, however, little knowledge about the causes of girls' violence, and few studies have been conducted on young women's delinquency and crime. This article reviews current research on girls' violent behavior, the factors contributing to it, and effective programming strategies to prevent it.

The Nature of Girls' Crime

Although girls are involved in more violent crime than they were a decade ago, violent crimes accounted for only 3.4 percent of girls' arrests in 1994 (Chesney-Lind and Brown, 1999). Part of the increase in their arrest rate for violent crimes may be attributable to changes in the way girls are charged. For example, a girl who shoves her parents in self-defense as she tries to run away is now likely to be arrested for assault, which is a criminal offense; previously, she would have been arrested for the lesser offense of running away (Chesney-Lind and Shelden, 1998). Nonetheless, girls continue to be arrested predominantly for "status" offenses (considered offenses only because the perpetrator is a minor), such as running away or violating curfews (Chesney-Lind and Shelden, 1998).

Differences Between Girls' and Boys' Violence

Violent crimes committed by girls differ significantly from those committed by boys. Although boys are two to three times more likely to carry weapons, girls are more likely to use knives than guns, which are boys' weapon of choice. Girls remain less likely than boys to be arrested in general and far less likely to be arrested for violent crimes (homicide, forcible rape, and aggravated assault) and serious property offenses (burglary and arson). The sex ratio of arrests changed very little during the 1990s: increases in girls' arrests paralleled increases in boys' arrests, suggesting that the upward trend simply "reflect[ed] overall changes in youth behavior" (Chesney-Lind and Brown, 1999, p. 176).

This article is adapted from the ERIC Digest *Girls and Violence*, by Jeanne Weiler.

Jeanne Weiler is Assistant Professor of Education, Educational Foundations, and Counseling at Hunter College, City University of New York. She previously served as Senior Research Specialist with the Institute for Urban and Minority Education at Teachers College, Columbia University, in New York City.

Girls' Participation in School-Related Violence

Most, but certainly not all, aggressive acts in school, such as physical fighting, bullying, and weapon carrying, are carried out by males and aimed at males. One study reported that nearly 18 percent of boys but only 5 percent of girls carried a weapon to school (Flannery, 1997). However, another study showed that in schools characterized by large numbers of boys carrying weapons, there was a correspondingly high rate of girls carrying weapons (Webster, Gainer, and Champion, 1993).

Causes of Girls' Violence

In the 1970s, violent girls began receiving more attention from researchers because of the perceived increase in their offenses and because of the involvement of more female researchers. Much of the work focused on explaining why so few females participated in criminal activity compared with males rather than on what motivated females toward crime and delinquency.

Differing male and female crime rates were attributed to differences in biology and socialization, which presumably produced aggressive, independent males and passive, dependent females (Artz, 1998). The increase in female violence was attributed to the perpetrator's renunciation of stereotypically female characteristics and values in favor of the corresponding male characteristics and values. The women's movement, which fostered assertiveness and was said to encourage young women to adopt certain "male behaviors" (drinking, stealing, and fighting), was blamed as well (Adler, 1975). Subsequent research, including data showing that the increase in female crime was really not significant, discredited most of these findings (Chesney-Lind and Shelden, 1998).

Current research on adolescent violence and delinquency considers how social class, race, ethnicity, and culture interact to cause young women to behave violently (Chesney-Lind and Shelden, 1998). It also helps explain why girls join gangs, which is to develop skills to survive in their harsh communities and temporarily escape a dismal future (Campbell, 1991; Chesney-Lind, Shelden, and Joe, 1996).

Violent young women are more likely than their nonviolent counterparts to come from troubled or violent families. A home life characterized by poverty, divorce, parental death, abandonment, alcoholism, and frequent abuse leaves girls quick to anger, distrust, and exact revenge (Artz, 1998; Koroki and Chesney-Lind, 1985). Abuse seems to play an especially large role in shaping female criminal behavior: incarcerated women (40–70 percent of respondents in various surveys) are much more likely than incarcerated men to report previous sexual or physical abuse (Artz, 1998; Chesney-Lind and Shelden, 1998; Koroki and Chesney-Lind, 1985).

The ways in which social class, race, ethnicity, and culture interact to contribute to girls' violence can be complex. For example, girls from poor ethnic families may seek recognition by adopting a "bad girl" image upon finding that they will be unable to attend college or otherwise gain status through white middle-class means (that is, schooling and careers). At the same time, many of these girls also embrace traditional gender-specific expectations for the future: marriage, support by a man, a large family, and a stereotypically female job. Many think that men should be strong and assertive and women passive and nonviolent (Koroki and Chesney-Lind, 1985). Such beliefs may encourage young women to remain in abusive romantic relationships and raise their risk of engaging in delinquent and violent acts (Chesney-Lind and Shelden, 1998).

The culture and environment in which children are raised can also affect school performance. Failure in school increases young people's risk for engaging in violence and delinquency (Artz, 1998), but poor school performance appears to have a stronger effect on girls than on boys (Rankin, 1980). High grades and positive self-esteem seem to suppress girls' involvement in violence and delinquency. For boys, high grades raise self-esteem, which can lead to risk taking and greater delinquency (Heimer, 1995).

Implications for Interventions

To serve young women effectively, violence intervention programs must develop culturally sensitive, gender-specific approaches. They must take into account the fact that girls' problems are often gender related—that is, related to sexual abuse, male violence,

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their role in the family, occupational inequality, or early motherhood. Unfortunately, funding for programs that address the unique needs of delinquent girls has been low: in 1975, for example, only 25 percent of funds donated by corporations supported programs for girls (Chesney-Lind and Shelden, 1998). A recent review of youth programs showed that only 2.3 percent of delinquency programs specifically served girls.

The few existing programs that are effective with at-risk young women share certain elements, including educational and occupational support, a comprehensive counseling component that addresses their unique needs, and provisions for meeting the needs of women who are unable to remain with their families (Chesney-Lind and Shelden, 1998). Effective programs also provide young women with access to caring adults and organized community activities.

Finally, because male violence and aggression against young women are often factors in female delinquency and violence, separate intervention programs need to be developed for aggressive and violent men and boys. This would minimize the risk of female victimization and, in turn, reduce the risk of girls' participation in violence.

Source

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Resources

Girls Incorporated National Headquarters (http://www.girlsinc.org). For more information, see page 37.

Warning Signs of School Violence

Kevin Dwyer, David Osher, and Cynthia Warger

Early Warning Signs

It is not always possible to predict behavior that will lead to violence. However, educators and parents—and sometimes students—can recognize certain early warning signs. In some situations and for some youth, different combinations of events, behaviors, and emotions may lead to aggressive rage or violent behavior toward themselves or others. A good rule of thumb is to assume that these warning signs, especially when they are presented in combination, indicate a need for further analysis to determine an appropriate intervention.

Most children who become violent toward themselves or others feel rejected and psychologically victimized. In most cases, children exhibit aggressive behavior early in life and, if not provided support, will continue a progressive developmental pattern toward severe aggression or violence. However, when children have a positive, meaningful connection to an

This article is adapted from *Early Warning, Timely Response: A Guide to Safe Schools*, by Kevin Dwyer, David Osher, and Cynthia Warger.

Kevin Dwyer is President of the National Association of School Psychologists in Bethesda, Maryland.

David Osher is Director of the Center for Effective Collaboration and Practice at the American Institutes for Research in Washington, DC.

Cynthia Warger is an educational consultant and President of Warger, Eavy, and Associates in Reston, Virginia.

adult—whether it be at home, in school, or in the community—the potential for violence is reduced significantly.

None of these signs alone is sufficient for predicting aggression and violence. Moreover, it is inappropriate—and potentially harmful—to use the early warning signs as a checklist against which to measure individual children. Rather, the early warning signs are offered only as an aid in identifying and referring children who may need help. School communities must ensure that staff and students use the early warning signs only for identification and referral purposes—only trained professionals should make diagnoses in consultation with the child's parents or guardian.

The following early warning signs are presented with the qualifications that they are not equally significant and are not presented in order of seriousness:

- Social withdrawal
- Excessive feelings of isolation and being alone
- Excessive feelings of rejection
- Being a victim of violence
- Feelings of being persecuted
- Low school interest and poor academic performance
- Expression of violence in writings and drawings
- Uncontrolled anger
- Patterns of impulsive and chronic hitting, intimidating, and bullying behaviors
- History of discipline problems
- History of violent and aggressive behavior
- Intolerance for differences and prejudicial attitudes
- Use of drugs and alcohol
- Affiliation with gangs
- Inappropriate access to firearms
- Serious threats of violence

Imminent Warning Signs

Unlike early warning signs, imminent warning signs indicate that a student is very close to behaving in a way that is potentially dangerous to himself or herself or others. Imminent warning signs require an immediate response.

No single warning sign can predict that a dangerous act will occur. Rather, imminent warning signs usually are presented as a sequence of overt, serious, hostile behaviors or threats directed at peers, staff, or other individuals. Usually, imminent warning signs are evident to more than one staff member as well as to the child's family. When warning signs indicate that danger is imminent, safety must always be the first and foremost consideration. Action must be taken immediately. Imminent warning signs may include

- Serious physical fighting with peers or family members.
- Severe destruction of property.
- Severe rage for seemingly minor reasons.
- Other self-injurious behaviors or threats of suicide.
- Threats of lethal violence.
- A detailed plan (time, place, and method) to harm or kill others, particularly if the child has a history of aggression or has attempted to carry out threats in the past.
- Possession and/or use of firearms and other weapons.

Immediate intervention by school authorities and possibly law enforcement officers is needed when a child has a detailed plan to commit violence or is carrying a weapon. Parents should be informed immediately when students exhibit any threatening behavior. School communities also have the responsibility to seek assistance from child and family services providers, community mental health agencies, and other appropriate organizations. These responses should reflect school board policies and be consistent with violence prevention and response plans.

Source

Dwyer, K., D. Osher, and C. Warger. 1998. *Early Warning, Timely Response: A Guide to Safe Schools.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Justice. ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 418 372. (Available online at http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/OSEP/earlywrn.html)

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Recent school shootings have drawn much of the nation's attention to the occurrence of serious violent incidents as the major school safety issue. But creating safer schools involves much more than concentrating on these rare events. School safety rests on the foundation of early intervention, which can range from implementing schoolwide discipline programs to increasing parental involvement in schools to promoting better ethnic relations in the community and the classroom. This section of "The ERIC Review" discusses some of the steps that schools, parents, and the community can take to enhance the learning environment, improve children's developmental outcomes, and ensure the safety of all students.

School Violence Prevention

Dean Walker

Eighty-nine percent of respondents in 700 cities and towns surveyed by the National League of Cities in 1994 said that school violence is a problem in their community (Arndt, 1994). Researchers have identified several major causes of violent behavior, causes so entangled that attempting to address one while ignoring another is to risk failure altogether. Poverty, racism, unemployment, substance abuse, easy access to weapons, inadequate or abusive parenting practices, and frequent exposure to violence through the media are all culpable (National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1993).

Tactics to deal with youth violence have been mostly one-dimensional, relying on the removal of the offender by suspension or placement outside the mainstream classroom. This action can protect other students; however, it has proven ineffective in preventing children from developing criminal careers. Educators and psychologists are eyeing the prevention of violent behavior as both a more humane and a more cost-effective response to this multidimensional problem (Walker, 1994).

What Can Schools Do To Prevent Violent Behavior?

Although many of the causes of violence seem to lie outside the influence of schools, a violent incident can raise instructive questions about what the school can do to prevent future incidents from occurring, such as (Curcio and First, 1993): What is the school's policy on weapons and violent behavior? Are students aware of the policy, and is it consistently enforced? How is violent behavior supported or discouraged by the school climate and the expectations of the staff and other students? What attempt is being made to teach students nonviolent conflict resolution? Are students appropriately supervised? Are staff members being taught to spot the potential for violent incidents and to defuse them? Is there a gang influence in the school?

This article is adapted from the ERIC Digest *School Violence Prevention*, by Dean Walker.

Dean Walker is a Child Development Specialist for the Junction City School District in Junction City, Oregon. He is also a licensed psychologist in private practice in Eugene, Oregon.

The first step in school violence prevention is to perform a systematic assessment of the problem. One way to approach such an assessment is to examine how the peaceful interaction of individuals and groups is facilitated by programs, policies, and processes at three levels: in the classroom, in the school, and in the district office (Hill and Hill, 1994).

At the classroom level, for example, research indicates that a focus on academic goals, modeling respectful behavior, and quick, nonintrusive intervention in misbehavior all discourage disorder, which can escalate into violence (Aleem and Moles, 1993). In addition, administrators can implement schoolwide discipline plans that involve all school staff, not just teachers, and the district office can continually train staff in violence reduction issues. Furthermore, to improve staff morale and functioning, the district office can provide human-resource benefits such as personal counseling or liberal leave policies (Hill and Hill, 1994).

How Are School Climate and School Violence Related?

Research shows that schools with low levels of violent behavior are distinguished from those with high levels by the presence of a positive school climate where nurturance, inclusiveness, and a feeling of community are evident (Walker, 1995). Students who feel recognized and appreciated by at least one adult at school will be less likely to act out against the school ethos of nonviolence (Walker, 1995).

A schoolwide discipline plan helps foster a peaceful, caring student culture. The plan should be designed to achieve the following goals (Walker, Colvin, and Ramsey, 1995):

- To actively teach children basic prosocial behaviors.
- To reinforce the exhibition of such behavior in highly visible ways.
- To consistently and fairly hold children accountable for misbehavior.

For more information, see "Schoolwide Behavioral Management Systems" on page 23.

Creating an appealing, noninstitutional atmosphere in the school can contribute to a positive school climate. Quickly repairing vandalism and showing care for the premises can discourage further vandalism. Getting students involved with beautifying the building and grounds heightens feelings of ownership and community (Sabo, 1993). In addition, new schools can incorporate design elements that simultaneously contribute to a positive school climate and discourage criminal activity. For more information, see "Safety by Design" on page 22.

What Role Does the Principal Play in Violence Reduction?

The principal can help establish school norms of nonviolence and feelings of community by developing sincere, caring relationships with groups of students and individuals. By maintaining a high profile, walking the halls, visiting classrooms, and being accessible to students and staff, the principal reduces the likelihood of antisocial behavior (Kadel and Follman, 1993).

The principal can encourage a sense of ownership of school programs and policies by sharing power with site-based management teams. This makes it more likely that discipline plans and academic goals will be supported consistently, which will improve school climate (Aleem and Moles, 1993).

Finally, the principal can make sure that the causes of violent behavior are comprehensively addressed. He or she can implement federal breakfast and lunch programs, institute antiracism programs, speak out against all harassment, and make social services available to students who need them (Curcio and First, 1993).

Can Students Learn Nonviolent Behaviors?

Curricula aimed at teaching children prosocial skills are based on the belief that violent behavior is learned through modeling and reinforcement and that these same processes can be used to teach children nonviolent behavior patterns (Committee for Children, 1989). Few tightly controlled studies have been done on the effectiveness of these curricula because of the time and cost involved. However, many of the curricula look promising, even though research is incomplete (Lawton, 1994).

Many elementary, middle, and high schools in America have instituted peer conflict resolution programs. Most programs begin by training students to empathize and cooperate with others, as well as to see others' points of view. In addition, all programs teach a process to help peers settle differences peacefully. Again, formal research on the effectiveness of these programs is limited, but cumulative data suggest that peer conflict resolution programs reduce discipline referrals, improve school climate, and increase students' self-esteem, confidence, and responsibility (Van Slyck and Stern, 1991). For more information, see "Conflict Resolution in Schools" on page 27.

How Can Schools Reduce Violence by Children With Serious Problems?

When children face poverty or abuse or other problems that may ultimately foster violent behavior, schools can collaborate closely with community social service agencies to provide children and their families with timely and affordable access to counseling, financial assistance, and protection. Educational programs for parents and families of children who are in trouble can create bonds between family and school that will benefit both (Kadel and Follman, 1993).

Conclusion

Although further research is required, preventive approaches to school violence look promising. However, success depends on the ability of schools and communities to work together in every aspect of program implementation.

Source

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Schools As Community Learning Centers

U.S. Department of Education

What Are Community Learning Centers?

Community learning centers are schools that extend the traditional school day to include before- and afterschool programs. Often, community learning centers are open during the summer as well. By keeping school doors open during nontraditional school hours, the schools provide students, parents, and the community with access to valuable educational resources. In addition, community learning centers can be safe havens for children, where learning takes place in buildings removed from the violence, drugs, and lack of supervision that permeate some communities in the United States.

Is There a Need?

Many children lack adult supervision between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. on school days. During these hours, youth between the ages of 12 and 17 are most at risk of committing, or being victims of, violent acts [U.S. Department of Education (ED), 1997].

According to ED (1998), although the number of afterschool child-care programs has increased during the past 20 years, there are still not enough organized, extended learning opportunities. The demand for school-based afterschool programs outstrips the supply at a rate of about 2 to 1. Seventy-four percent of elementary and middle school parents said that they would be willing to pay for such a program, yet only about 31 percent of elementary school parents and 39 percent of middle school parents reported that their children actually attended an afterschool program at school.

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Schools As Community Learning Centers (continued)

The lack of affordable, accessible afterschool opportunities for school-age children means that an estimated 5 to 7 million "latchkey children" are left unsupervised at home after school. About 35 percent of 12-year-olds are left by themselves regularly while their parents are at work (ED, 1998).

What Are the Benefits?

- Public schools are often low-cost, accessible locations in which to extend learning.
- Extending the hours that schools are open is a cost-effective means of giving students the opportunities they need to learn and develop in an enriching, safe, and drug-free setting.
- Community learning centers are well positioned to help younger children meet the America Reads Challenge that all children will read independently and well by the end of the third grade.
- Community learning centers can provide the extra encouragement and support that many children need to take and pass algebra and geometry in middle and junior high school and to succeed in Advanced Placement classes and the other challenging courses in high school that are necessary to prepare them for college.
- Community learning centers can offer children and youth long-term mentoring opportunities to help them master basic skills while offering them enrichment activities that often encourage the development of lifelong interests.
- Community learning centers allow all the partners in a child's education to become involved and use their diverse talents and resources; for example, science professionals can be mentors for middle school students, sharing their expertise in science and serving as role models for the importance of education.

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Where Can I Find More Information?

To find out more about how to open, finance, and evaluate a community learning center, see *Keeping Schools Open As Community Learning Centers: Extending Learning in a Safe, Drug-Free Environment Before and After School* at http://www.ed.gov/pubs/LearnCenters. For more information on successful program practices, including profiles of exemplary afterschool programs across the country, see *Safe and Smart: Making the After-School Hours Work for Kids* at http://www.ed.gov/pubs/SafeandSmart. In addition, free copies of both publications can be obtained from ED Pubs, the U.S. Department of Education's Publications Center, by calling toll free 1–877–433–7827 or by ordering online at http://www.ed.gov/pubs/edpubs.html.

This information is adapted from the following publications:

U.S. Department of Education. 1998. *Safe and Smart: Making the After-School Hours Work for Kids.* Washington, DC: Author. (Available online at http://www.ed.gov/pubs/SafeandSmart)

U.S. Department of Education. 1997. *Keeping Schools Open As Community Learning Centers: Extending Learning in a Safe, Drug-Free Environment Before and After School.* Washington, DC: Author. ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 409 659. (Available online at http://www.ed.gov/pubs/LearnCenters)

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Safety by Design

Don Blue

Architects, interior designers, and other space planners have the opportunity to improve school safety by incorporating certain design elements, such as inconspicuous surveillance features and access-control features, in the renovation of existing schools and in the construction of new schools. One safety-by-design approach, Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design, blends effective design with the physical, social, and psychological needs of students, faculty, and staff. The following recommendations are based on this approach:

- Promote a sense of ownership in the school campus by
  - Creating a smaller look and feel to the school campus. Divide school buildings into separate areas for freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors. Use color and design to create smaller, clearly distinguished spaces.
  - Creating multiple student-friendly areas where students can gather. These areas should accommodate four to six students each and should be located where adults can easily monitor them.
- Provide natural surveillance or the perception of surveillance by
  - Promoting visual monitoring. Maximize sight lines for school entrances, hallways, cafeterias, playgrounds, student gathering areas, and other key locations.
  - Reducing or eliminating hallway projections that limit visual monitoring and block the movement of students. Create broad, well-lit hallways with see-through or beveled corners.
  - Locating bathrooms in areas that facilitate monitoring. Provide a well-lit maze entrance that allows quick entry and exit for students and that facilitates staff supervision. Toilet stalls should be designed to allow staff to see below and above partitions.
- Provide natural access control by
  - Limiting the number of entrances to and exits from school parking lots and providing for easy closure of entrances during nonpeak hours.
  - Eliminating interior or exterior entrapment areas. Enclose hiding places, such as the underside of stairwells, and look for ways to eliminate recessed exits in out-of-the-way areas.
  - Defining hallways, classrooms, offices, and school wings or departments through the use of varied wall and floor colors, textures, and materials.
  - Directing all visitors through one entrance that offers contact with a receptionist who controls visitor registration and distribution of visitor passes.

This information is adapted from Blue, D. 1998. "Safety by Design." Supplement to a conference paper presented at the 1998 International Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design Association International Conference. (Available online at http://www.arch.vt.edu/crimeprev/pages/confpapers.html/blue.html)

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Schoolwide Behavioral Management Systems

Mary K. Fitzsimmons and Cynthia Warger

Editor's note: During the 1996-97 school year, schools that reported serious discipline problems were more likely to have experienced one or more incidents of crime or violence and were more likely to experience serious violent crime than schools that reported less-serious discipline problems (Heaviside and others, 1998). Although only 16 percent of U.S. public schools reported serious discipline problems, 41 percent reported moderate problems. This article illustrates the importance of discipline in combating school crime and violence.

For more than a quarter of a century, the number one concern facing America's public schools has been discipline. What educators are finding, however, is that the root of the problem goes beyond rule breaking. Many of today's students need more than just sound and consistent discipline policies; they also need positive behavioral instruction.

Consequently, educators are seeking new ways to move beyond traditional "punishment" and provide opportunities for all children to learn self-discipline. Researchers are studying and advocating for broader, proactive, positive schoolwide discipline systems that include behavioral support. One promising avenue for achieving the dual goals of teaching self-discipline and managing behavior is schoolwide behavioral management.

Although schoolwide behavioral management systems vary, most have certain features in common (see the box on page 24). The emphasis is on consistency, both throughout the school and across classrooms. The entire school staff (including cafeteria workers and bus drivers) are expected to adopt strategies that will be uniformly implemented. As a result, the success of schoolwide programs depends on professional development and the long-term commitment of the school's leadership. Promising behavioral management systems include those described below.

Effective Behavioral Support

Effective Behavioral Support (EBS) refers to a system of schoolwide processes and individualized instruction designed to prevent and decrease problem behavior and to maintain appropriate behavior. It is not a model with a prescribed set of practices (Lewis, 1997). Rather, it is a team-based process designed to address the unique needs of individual schools. Teams of educators are provided with empirically validated practices and, through the EBS process, arrive at a schoolwide plan. To implement EBS, educators should

- Clarify the need for EBS and establish faculty and staff commitment to EBS. Priority for this should be reflected in the school's improvement plan.
- Develop a team focus with shared ownership.
- Select practices that have a sound research base.
- Create a comprehensive system that prevents as well as responds to problem behavior.
- Tie effective behavioral support activities to the school's mission.
- Develop an action plan establishing staff responsibilities.
- Monitor behavioral support activities.
- Continue successful procedures and change or abandon ineffective procedures.

Several factors foster EBS success. First, faculty and staff must agree that schoolwide behavioral management is one of their top priorities and that it will probably require three to five years for completion. Second, teams must start with an attainable objective that meets their needs and provides an opportunity for some initial success. Finally, administrators must support the process by respecting team decisions, providing time for team meetings, securing ongoing staff training, and encouraging the participation of all staff members.

Unified Discipline

Unified Discipline is a schoolwide behavioral management system that comprises the following characteristics:

- Unified attitudes. All school personnel believe that instruction can improve student behavior, that behavioral instruction is part of

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This article is adapted from the ERIC Digest *Schoolwide Behavioral Management Systems*, by Mary K. Fitzsimmons and Cynthia Warger.

Mary K. Fitzsimmons is an educational consultant and President of Metro, Inc., in Reston, Virginia.

Cynthia Warger is an educational consultant and President of Warger, Eavy, and Associates in Reston, Virginia.

teaching, that personalizing misbehavior makes matters worse, and that emotional poise underlies effective discipline methods.

- Unified expectations. Consistent and fair expectations for behavioral instruction are key to successful discipline plans.
- Unified consequences. Consequences for behavioral violations are uniform and applied consistently across classrooms. Using a warm yet firm voice, teachers state the behavior, the violated rule, and the unified consequence and offer encouragement.
- Unified team roles. All school personnel have clear responsibilities.

Is a Schoolwide System Right for You?

Clearly, from a preventive standpoint, researchers would agree that all schools could benefit from having in place a clearly defined, consistently enforced behavioral management system that is designed to support students in controlling their own behaviors. In cases where school staff have significant concerns about discipline, a schoolwide system may be a welcome solution.

Source

Fitzsimmons, M. K., and C. Warger. 1998. *Schoolwide Behavioral Management Systems*. Reston, VA: ERIC Clearinghouse on Disabilities and Gifted Education. ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 417 515.

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Resources

For more information on the schoolwide behavioral management systems described in this article, including accompanying research, a complete list of resources, and profiles of schools that have implemented specific programs, see the Fall 1997 issue of *Research Connections*, which is available online at http://www.cec.sped.org/osep/recon.htm. To order free paper copies, call the ERIC Clearinghouse on Disabilities and Gifted Education at 1–800–328–0272.

Common Features of Schoolwide Behavioral Management Systems

1. Total staff commitment to managing student behavior.
2. Clearly defined and communicated expectations and rules.
3. Clearly stated consequences and procedures for correcting rule-breaking behaviors.
4. An instructional component for teaching students self-control, social skills, or both.
5. A support plan to address the needs of students with chronic challenging behaviors.

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Improving Ethnic and Racial Relations in the Schools

Harriett D. Romo

In recent years, several factors have contributed to conflicts among students of different backgrounds: changes triggered by the civil rights movement, the diversity of U.S. immigrants, and an increasing awareness of ethnic identity. Tensions can exist among different ethnic and racial groups despite the presence of those groups in the United States for generations. Group conflicts can affect academic achievement as well as social relationships. This article discusses ethnic and racial tensions in U.S. schools and suggests various ways to reduce them.

Origins of Ethnic and Racial Relations in Schools

Many patterns of ethnic and racial relations in U.S. schools reflect the ways that certain ethnic or racial groups have historically been included in or excluded from American society. Therefore, these patterns cannot be fully understood without considering slavery, the discrimination faced by Southern European immigrants, the conquests of the Indians and Mexican Americans, the relocation of Japanese citizens during World War II, and the experiences of Cuban and Vietnamese refugees and other recent immigrants (McLemore and Romo, 1998).

Schools have historically helped include newcomers in American society and continue to do so. However, previous research on intergroup relations (relations between ethnic groups) in schools is now 15 or 20 years old, and it focused mostly on improving relations between whites and African Americans (Schofield, 1995).

Today, ethnic and racial relations are more complex. First, intragroup conflicts (conflicts within ethnic groups) can occur in U.S. schools. For example, Hispanic students born in the United States may be prejudiced against or hold stereotypes about recent Hispanic immigrants. Similar intragroup tensions may also exist in African-American or Asian communities. Second, factors affecting the outcomes of intergroup contacts can include ethnocentrism (the belief that one's own group is superior), competition for resources and attention, and the relative power and status of the groups involved.

Intergroup Relations and Academic Achievement

Some research suggests that minority students sometimes fail to perform to the best of their ability because they think of making good grades and doing schoolwork as "acting white" (Ogbu, 1990). Other studies reveal that Hispanic students who complete homework or participate actively in class are often ridiculed as "schoolboys" or "nerds" by their peers (Romo and Falbo, 1996). In addition, anxiety about dealing with members of other racial or ethnic groups is prevalent among students and can direct behavior in ways that diminish academic achievement (Stephan, 1985).

Identity Functions of Ethnic and Racial Conflicts

Researchers in multiethnic schools have found that students tend to resegregate themselves. For instance, ethnic groups may establish ethnic boundaries, defining particular areas of the school as "their territory" (Romo and Falbo, 1996). Also, ethnic groups may exclude members of other groups from friendship cliques and social activities or may limit their status and popularity. This can lead to ethnic and racial conflicts, which can help group members establish an alternative sense of identity within the school.

Additionally, ethnic boundaries may be more or less important depending on the school context, the income and age of the students, and social and economic conditions in the larger society. The divisions between "them" and "us" may change when some groups become more numerous or when "old-timers" and "newcomers" compete. Conflicts make ethnic group boundaries more distinct and may increase each group's unity (Olsen, 1997).

Group conflicts may also create leadership roles for students. For example, when groups fight, the best fighters may gain higher peer status. Afterward, group members may feel less alienated. As a result, the potential for conflict increases in proportion to the perceived benefits of membership in the group.

Consequently, for schools to focus on academics, they must make efforts to prevent ethnic and racial clashes. Recognizing common values (all students want to feel that they belong) and

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This article is adapted from the ERIC Digest *Improving Ethnic and Racial Relations in the Schools*, by Harriett D. Romo.

Harriett D. Romo is Associate Professor of Social and Behavioral Sciences at the University of Texas at San Antonio.

differential power (some groups "belong" more than others) is essential for maintaining stability and positive relationships in multiethnic classrooms. Interventions to reduce prejudice and discrimination are also essential.

Reducing Prejudice and Discrimination in Schools

There are several ways to reduce prejudice and discrimination in schools, including educational approaches, vicarious experience approaches, and cooperative learning (McLemore and Romo, 1998). These methods vary depending on the age of the students and are described below.

Educational approaches expose students and teachers to accurate information about other groups, which allows them to learn about intergroup similarities and differences. When individuals have accurate information, they are less likely to accept stereotypes and adopt prejudices (Hewstone and Brown, 1986; Sue, 1995). As students and educators gain knowledge about other groups and their histories, they become more likely to respect members of those groups and cooperate with them. Drawing attention to the processes of discrimination, engaging actively in team building, and consulting continuously with students all help develop a new culture of tolerance and understanding (Pearl, 1997).

Instead of teaching facts about different groups to students, vicarious experience approaches are intergroup educational programs that use films, plays, biographies, novels, and other methods to present members of all groups in a respectful way. Exposure to such materials helps students recognize the commonalities of all groups and reduce their tendency to draw sharp boundaries between "them" and "us."

The effectiveness of a vicarious experience approach depends on how the message of tolerance is presented. Poor presentations, in which the presenter does not know the material well, uses biased material, or has little rapport with the audience, may actually increase prejudices instead of reducing them. (See Resource at the end of this article.)

In cooperative learning, students of different ethnicities and races work together in groups that receive rewards, recognition, or evaluation based on how much they can improve each member's academic performance. This approach provides daily opportunities for intense interpersonal contact among students from different backgrounds and is structured to give each student an opportunity to contribute.

When used correctly, cooperative learning methods can create thoughtful, equitable interactions needed to promote positive racial attitudes, result in intergroup friendships and improved intergroup attitudes, and improve academic achievement, particularly for Latino and African-American students (Slavin, 1995). However, if the activities are organized inappropriately, students participating in cooperative learning or other intergroup programs may become more prejudiced. Also key are parent, teacher, and peer support for the activities. ■

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Source

Romo, H. D. 1997. *Improving Ethnic and Racial Relations in the Schools*. Charleston, WV: ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools. ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 414 113.

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Resource

Teaching Tolerance is a magazine that schools can receive at no charge. For more information, contact Teaching Tolerance, 400 Washington Avenue, Montgomery, AL 36104.

Conflict Resolution in Schools

Conflict Resolution Education Network

What Is Conflict Resolution?

Conflict resolution refers to programs that allow students to resolve disputes peacefully outside the school's traditional disciplinary procedures. Schools that maintain conflict resolution programs teach, model, and incorporate the processes and problem-solving skills of mediation, negotiation, and collaboration. A fundamental concept of conflict resolution is that the disputing parties solve the problem themselves. Peer mediation, the most common type of conflict resolution program, uses students as neutral third parties in resolving disputes.

How Does It Work?

To work effectively, conflict resolution requires specific skills and steps. Students must learn how to listen, empathize, reason analytically, think creatively, and understand another person's point of view. In addition, conflict resolution comprises several steps in which the parties to the dispute

- Agree to meet and set ground rules.
- Gather information about the conflict.
- Identify what the dispute is really about.
- Suggest possible options for resolution of the dispute.
- Select one or more workable options.
- Reach agreement.

What Are the Benefits?

Conflict resolution programs can

- Support violence prevention policies by teaching skills and processes for solving problems before they escalate to violence.
- Help students develop personal behavioral management skills, act responsibly in the school community, and accept the consequences of their own behavior.
- Help students develop the fundamental competencies (including self-control, self-respect, empathy, and teamwork) necessary to make a successful transition to adulthood.
- Teach cognitive and other skills necessary for high academic achievement.
- Teach students to respect others as individuals and as group members.
- Teach students how to build and maintain responsible and productive intergroup relations.

Where Can I Find More Information?

The Conflict Resolution Education Network (CREnet), part of the National Institute for Dispute Resolution, is the primary national and international clearinghouse for information, resources, and technical assistance related to conflict resolution and training. For more information, call CREnet at 202–667–9700 or visit the Web site at http://www.crenet.org.

In addition, the U.S. Department of Education's Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program (http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/SDFS) and the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (http://ojjdp.ncjrs.org) also provide information on conflict resolution.

This information is adapted from *Conflict Resolution Education Facts* (online document on the Conflict Resolution Education Network Web site at http://www.crenet.org/cren/facts.html).

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Father Involvement in Schools

Christine Winquist Nord

Editor's note: According to the National Association for the Education of Young Children (1993), abusive or inadequate parenting practices contribute to violent behavior in children. Children learn social, cognitive, and other skills by identifying with their parents and other adult role models. Many of these skills enable children not only to resolve conflicts peacefully but also to succeed academically (Prothrow-Stith and Quaday, 1995). This article shows the important role that fathers play in their children's social adjustment and academic success.

Until recently, fathers were the "hidden" parent in research on children's well-being. Their importance to children's financial well-being was widely accepted, but their contribution to other aspects of children's development was often assumed to be secondary to that of mothers and was not usually examined. Reflecting this bias in research on child development, many federal agencies, as well as other agencies and programs dealing with family issues, focused almost exclusively on mothers and their children. In 1995, President Clinton issued a memorandum requesting that all executive departments and agencies make a concerted effort to include fathers in their programs, policies, and research programs where appropriate and feasible (Clinton, 1995). Research stimulated by the new interest in fathers suggests that fathers' involvement in their children's schools does make a difference in their children's education (Nord, Brimhall, and West, 1997).

This article describes the link between father involvement and student academic achievement in grades K–12, using data from the *National Household Education Survey of 1996* (Collins and others, 1997).

National Household Education Survey of 1996 (NHES:96)

NHES:96 contrasted the involvement of fathers in two-parent and father-only families with that of mothers in two-parent and mother-only families. Information related to the link between father involvement and student achievement was presented for children living in two-parent households and for those living in father-only households. (The analyses were restricted to children living with biological fathers, stepfathers, or adoptive fathers. Children living with foster fathers were excluded.)

NHES:96 examined four types of school activities that parents could participate in during the school year: attending a general school meeting, attending a regularly scheduled parent-teacher conference, attending a school or class event, and serving as a volunteer at the school. Parent involvement was classified as low, or minimal (participation in none or only one of the four activities during the current school year); moderate (participation in at least two of the activities); or high (participation in three or four of the activities). Note that low involvement may have been due to parents' failure to take advantage of available opportunities for involvement or due to the schools' failure to offer such opportunities to parents.

Father Involvement and Student Academic Achievement

Policymakers and educators agree that family involvement in children's education is closely linked to children's school success (U.S. Department of Education, 1994; Henderson and Berla, 1994). However, many policymakers, school officials, and families often assume that "family involvement" means mother involvement. This assumption has some basis in fact because mothers are more likely than fathers to be highly involved in their children's schools, and the extent of their involvement is strongly related to children's school performance and adjustment (Nord, Brimhall, and West, 1997). However, an important question is: Does father involvement matter as well?

Fathers in Two-Parent Families

Fifty percent of students whose fathers were classified as highly involved earned mostly A's and enjoyed school, according to their parents, compared with about 33 percent of students whose fathers were classified as minimally involved. Students were also half as likely to have repeated a grade if their fathers were highly as opposed to minimally involved in their schools (7 percent versus 15 percent) and were significantly less likely to have been suspended or expelled (10 percent versus 18 percent).

When factors such as mother involvement, father's and mother's education, household income, and children's race and ethnicity were controlled, children were still more likely to earn A's, participate in extracurricular activities, and enjoy school and were less likely to have repeated a grade when their fathers were involved in any way than

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This article is adapted from the ERIC Digest *Father Involvement in Schools*, by Christine Winquist Nord.

Christine Winquist Nord is Senior Study Director at Westat, a survey research firm in Rockville, Maryland.

when they were not involved at all (Nord, Brimhall, and West, 1997). However, when these same factors were controlled, mother involvement, but not father involvement, was associated with a reduced likelihood of suspension or expulsion of children in grades 6–12.

Father-Only Households

Some research suggests that children living in single-parent households are, on average, less successful in school and experience more behavioral problems than children living in two-parent households (McLanahan and Sandefur, 1994). Most research on single parenthood has focused on children living with single mothers. However, NHES:96 revealed that children living in father-only households were also less successful in school than children living in two-parent households.

The research also showed that when their fathers were highly as opposed to minimally involved, children in father-only households did better in school, were more likely to participate in extracurricular activities, enjoyed school more, and were less likely to have been suspended or expelled. Nearly 33 percent of students whose fathers were classified as highly involved earned mostly A's, compared with 17 percent of students whose fathers were classified as minimally involved.

Even more striking, of children in grades 6–12, only 11 percent of students whose fathers were classified as highly involved had been suspended or expelled, compared with 34 percent of students whose fathers were classified as minimally involved. Although a similar pattern was observed for grade repetition, the difference between children whose fathers had high and minimal levels of involvement was not statistically significant.

When factors such as father's education, household income, and children's race and ethnicity were controlled, children did better in school and were less likely to have been suspended or expelled if their fathers were highly as opposed to minimally involved in their schools.

Conclusion

The involvement of fathers in their children's schools is important for children's academic achievement and behavior. In two-parent households, the influence of father involvement on academic achievement is distinct and independent from that of mother involvement. These findings show that fathers can be a positive force in their children's education and that when they do get involved, their children are likely to do better in school. Unfortunately, many fathers are relatively uninvolved in their children's schools (Nord, Brimhall, and West, 1997). These results should encourage fathers to become more involved in their children's schools and should encourage schools to welcome father involvement.

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Source

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Evaluating School Violence Prevention Programs

Daniel J. Flannery

Most violence prevention programs represent thoughtful responses to violence and disorganization in the schools and to the resulting escalation of fear. However, the majority of these programs are offered without any evidence of their effectiveness. This is one of the major reasons Congress has restricted funding for drug and violence prevention programs in schools to those that can provide positive outcome-evaluation data. Therefore, program evaluation plays an important part in helping to reduce school violence. Evaluation can guide effective program implementation; enable schools to demonstrate the value of the program to parents, sources of funding, and the community; and influence the formation and implementation of social policy, both locally and nationally.

Types of Evaluation

The three most basic questions pertaining to any intervention program are

- What are the program's results?
- What program qualities make it work?
- Is the program cost effective?

Four basic types of evaluation—needs assessment, outcome evaluation, process evaluation, and cost-benefit analysis—can be integrated into the existing structure of most schools and programs to address these questions.

Needs Assessment

A needs assessment (or formative evaluation) can help a school determine its needs regarding violence reduction and prevention. Many educators might skip this first type of evaluation, believing that all they need to know is that they have to do something to reduce and prevent violence. However, educators can develop a more effective long-term strategy by considering the following questions:

- What are the nature and prevalence of violence and victimization at the school and in the neighborhood?
- What is the impact of violence on children's adjustment, mental health, and learning?
- What are the school's monetary costs resulting from vandalism and violence-related discipline problems?
- What is the extent of gang activity at the school?

Educators should also determine which precursors of youth violence are affecting students in their particular school. (For a description of these precursors, see the box on page 31.)

Outcome Evaluation

Outcome evaluation addresses the following questions:

- What has changed because of the program?
- Has the program resulted in reduced problem behavior, aggression, delinquency, or violence?
- Has the program resulted in increased student attendance and academic achievement?
- Has the program resulted in reduced discipline visits to the principal's office?
- Has the program resulted in increased social competence or improved social skills?

Being clear about what the program is meant to address and not address is essential to measuring its effectiveness. Some programs may be effective in changing specific problem behaviors, but they might not reduce student violence. For example, a substance-abuse prevention program may do little to reduce victimization by violence or the perpetration of violence.

Process Evaluation

Process evaluation (or monitoring evaluation) focuses on the question: Which aspect or aspects of the program work best and why? The program's effectiveness may be related to the quality of teacher or staff training, the amount of teaching experience that individual teachers have, the amount of support from the administration, the scope of the program (that is, whether it is schoolwide or confined to lessons in one classroom), parent involvement and support, or something else. For example, a process evaluation of a middle school substance-abuse prevention program revealed that teachers believed that the level of parent involvement (as volunteers in the classroom) was the biggest factor affecting the program's level of success—more important than administrative support, teacher support, and quality of teacher training (Flannery and Torquati, 1993).

This article is adapted from the ERIC Digest *Improving School Violence Prevention Programs Through Meaningful Evaluation*, by Daniel J. Flannery.

Daniel J. Flannery is Associate Professor of Criminal Justice Studies at Kent State University in Kent, Ohio, and Associate Professor of Pediatrics at University Hospitals of Cleveland.

Cost-Benefit Analysis

A cost-benefit analysis addresses the question: Is the program cost effective? The analysis might include a monetary assessment of how much the program costs to implement per student or school or how much the program saves in related costs. For example, a study examining the cost effectiveness of several crime prevention strategies showed that early intervention could be more cost effective for reducing serious crime than a "three strikes" policy (Greenwood and others, 1996). This finding has serious implications for policymakers who believe that increased incarceration time for juvenile offenders will systematically reduce the youth crime rate over time.

Evaluation Methods

To evaluate violence prevention programs, schools can use a number of low-cost methods, including self-reports by students, teachers, parents, and administrators. Student reports on violence and victimization will be increasingly difficult to gather, however, given the increased attention to the protection of human subjects, particularly minors, in behavioral and medical research. Research may still be conducted on these important topics, but the days of large surveys with thousands of students may be past.

In addition, most schools routinely collect archival data on attendance, grades, conduct ratings on report cards, disciplinary contacts, suspensions, weapons violations, visits to the nurse's office for treatment of injuries, and costs to repair damage caused by vandalism. Additional archival data can also be collected; for example, two of the most accurate precursors of adolescent delinquency and criminal arrest are visits to the principal's office for disciplinary action and observational ratings of aggressive behavior at school (Walker, Colvin, and Ramsey, 1995).

School administrators can also develop partnerships with local police or sheriff's departments to gather aggregate data on community crime and on crime involving their particular students.

Components of Successful Program Evaluation

Successful program evaluation yields valid and readily interpretable data and includes three basic components. First, preintervention data should be collected to establish baseline measures on several variables (such as student behavior, grades, and attendance) with which postintervention data can be compared.

Second, if possible, a control group of similar students should be established. The control group, which can comprise students at the same school or at a different school, will not be exposed to the intervention program. Comparison of data collected from the control group and the treatment group will help determine whether the intervention program has been effective.

Third, students should be randomly assigned to treatment groups or control groups. This will be the most difficult, practically and ethically, to achieve and may not be possible in most real-world situations. However,

Precursors of Youth Violence

- Perinatal risk, such as birth complications (for example, breech delivery, preeclampsia, or oxygen deprivation due to prolonged delivery) when accompanied by early maternal rejection (Brier, 1995).
- A child temperament characterized by impulsivity, high activity levels, inflexibility, difficulty with transitions, and easy frustration and distraction (Brier, 1995).
- Limited intelligence, particularly verbal intelligence; low school achievement and lack of attachment to school; poor problem-solving and social skills; and a tendency to make cognitive misattributions and to have impaired social judgment (Moffitt, 1993; Lochman and Dodge, 1994).
- The early onset and stability of aggressive, antisocial behavior, sometimes even beginning at the kindergarten level (Loeber and Hay, 1994).
- Poor parenting, including maltreatment and abuse, neglect, rejection, frequent and harsh punishment, inconsistent and ineffective punishment, parental criminal behavior, and living in a climate of hostility (Patterson and Yoerger, 1993).
- Exposure to and victimization by violence in the school, in the community, or at home (Widom, 1991; Singer and others, 1995).
- High exposure to violence in the media, which can cause acceptance and emulation of aggression, desensitization to violence and its consequences, and development of a "mean world syndrome"—an increased fear of victimization and a perceived need to protect oneself and mistrust others (Centerwall, 1992).

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random assignment of two equally deserving children, with similar assessments of both children, will produce the strongest evidence that it was the treatment that caused any observed differences in a child's outcome. One strategy that has been used successfully is random assignment of students (or classrooms or schools) to treatment or control groups at the beginning of an evaluation, with provision for exposing the original control group to the intervention program after the data are collected. This is easier to do if the unit of analysis is the classroom or school rather than the individual. If the control group is an entire school, then all students in the school will still receive the same services and attention that they always have received. If the control group is an individual student, it is harder to justify withholding treatment. This is especially true when the treatment may address a very serious, immediate, and potentially dangerous problem like violence.

Conclusion

The purpose of evaluating a violence prevention program is to assess and improve its effectiveness. The ultimate goal, of course, is to enhance school safety, promote respect for diversity, and foster student behavior conducive to high academic achievement. Although violence prevention programs vary according to the needs of individual schools, successful programs are comprehensive, long-term, developmentally appropriate, and instituted early. In addition, successful programs develop social competence in students; consider the impact of violence and victimization by violence; integrate violence-related issues into teacher training; improve school climate through increased student, staff, and parent participation; and include a comprehensive evaluation component.

Source

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Ensuring the safety of all students requires the collaborative efforts of the entire community. This section of "The ERIC Review" describes federal support for school safety and violence prevention programs, presents a sample of model programs that educators can implement in their classrooms, and provides information resources for educators, parents, researchers, and others interested in learning more about these topics. We hope that you will find these resources helpful as a starting point for further investigation.

Federal Support for Improving School Safety

Kevin Mitchell

The federal government continues to show strong support for programs and initiatives designed to improve the safety of U.S. schools. One of the seven priorities of the U.S. Department of Education (ED) is to ensure that every school in the United States will be strong, safe, drug free, and disciplined. Other agencies, particularly the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), have also devoted extensive resources to this goal. The following discussion provides an overview of these federal efforts.

Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program

ED sponsors the Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program (http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/SDFS), the federal government's primary vehicle for meeting the seventh priority through education and prevention activities in the schools. Funded at $566 million for fiscal year 1999, the Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program administers initiatives and activities authorized by Title IV of the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994. The Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program consists of two major components: National Programs and State Grants for Drug and Violence Prevention Programs.

Safe and Drug-Free Schools National Programs support a variety of discretionary activities that respond to emerging needs. Many of these activities are prevention projects coordinated by several federal agencies. For example, ED, DOJ, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the National Institute of Mental Health, the Office of Management and Budget, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency all support Project SERV (School Emergency Response to Violence). Project SERV, proposed by President Clinton in 1998, would help school districts and communities cope with the consequences of major acts of violence by providing training and technical assistance, identifying best practices, and improving coordination at the federal, state, and local levels.

Grants

ED supports a number of grants through the Safe and Drug-Free Schools National Programs. For example, ED awards competitive grants to approximately 120 school districts for activities that promote

Kevin Mitchell is Co-Editor of *The ERIC Review* and a writer/editor for ACCESS ERIC in Rockville, Maryland.

safe and drug-free learning environments. Grantees are required to demonstrate that their schools have severe drug or safety problems and to implement related research-based programs and strategies that address those problems. In addition, ED funds continuation awards for grants to improve the effectiveness of prevention programming for youth.

Through the Safe and Drug-Free Schools State Grants for Drug and Violence Prevention Programs, ED supports drug and violence prevention in almost every school district and community in the United States. ED allocated $441 million to these formula state grants for fiscal year 1999.

For more information on these and other drug and violence prevention grants offered through the Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program, see the Web site at http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/SDFS/grants.html. For general information on ED's grant opportunities, see *What Should I Know About ED Grants?* (http://www.ed.gov/pubs/KnowAbtGrants) and *Guide to U.S. Department of Education Programs and Resources* (http://web99.ed.gov/GTEP/Program2.nsf).

Initiatives

ED also supports several initiatives to promote safe schools. For example, the Middle School Coordinator Initiative, funded at $35 million for fiscal year 1999, allows school districts to hire and train school safety coordinators who will improve drug and violence prevention programs in middle schools.

The Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative, a joint project of ED, DOJ, and HHS, helps schools and communities implement and enhance communitywide strategies for creating safe and drug-free schools and for promoting healthy childhood development. In September 1999, President Clinton announced more than $100 million in grants to 54 communities. The funds will be used to make schools safer and help protect youngsters from violent behavior and drug and alcohol use.

In addition, President Clinton announced the National School Safety Training Program for Teachers and Educational Personnel in June 1999. ED, DOJ, and HHS will participate in this program by developing training sessions, distributing materials, coordinating outreach programs, and providing technical assistance to the National Education Association and other partners.

The fiscal year 1999 budget for Safe and Drug-Free Schools National Programs also included funds for President Clinton's Safe Schools/Safe Communities Initiative. Another joint project of ED, DOJ, and HHS, this initiative is designed to help communities develop and implement coordinated, comprehensive school safety plans involving leadership from schools, police departments, and mental health agencies.

For more information on school safety initiatives, see the Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program's Web site at http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/SDFS. To stay abreast of all education initiatives, see ED's Web site at http://www.ed.gov/pubs/EDInitiatives.

Information, Training, and Technical Assistance

ED and several other federal agencies support safe, drug-free schools by providing information, training, and technical assistance to schools and their surrounding communities. For example, ED and DOJ support the National Resource Center for Safe Schools (http://www.safetyzone.org), which provides online access to related databases, publications, funding opportunities, and Web sites, in addition to training and technical assistance.

The National Center for Conflict Resolution Education (http://www.nccre.org), another joint project of ED and DOJ, provides training and technical assistance to advance the development of conflict resolution education programs in a variety of settings, including schools, juvenile justice settings, and youth service organizations.

In addition, ED funds the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) through the Office of Educational Research and Improvement and the National Library of Education. ERIC maintains the world's largest education database, which includes a wealth of information on school safety and on drug and violence prevention. Several of the ERIC Clearinghouses, including Counseling and Student Services (http://www.uncg.edu/edu/ericcass), Educational Management (http://eric.uoregon.edu), and Urban Education (http://eric-web.tc.columbia.edu), provide relevant online resources and information. In addition, the AskERIC Web site (http://www.askeric.org) provides many resources related to school safety, including links to relevant Web sites, e-mail lists, and ERIC publications.

Other federal and federally funded organizations that provide information and other resources related to school safety include the Center for Mental Health in Schools (http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu), the Center for Effective Collaboration and Practice (http://www.air-dc.org/cecp), and DOJ's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (http://ojjdp.ncjrs.org/resources/topic.html).

Publications

ED publishes many excellent publications on school safety and on drug and violence prevention, including the *Annual Report on School Safety; Indicators of School Crime and Safety, 1998; Early Warning, Timely Response: A Guide to Safe Schools; Creating Safe and Drug-Free Schools: An Action Guide;* and *Protecting Students From Harassment and Hate Crime: A Guide for Schools.* Readers can link to online versions of these publications from ED's Web site at http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/SDFS/safeschools.html. In addition, all of ED's current free publications and products are available through ED's Publications Center (ED Pubs). Visitors to the ED Pubs Web site (http://www.ed.gov/pubs/edpubs.html) can search the online catalog by title or browse by subject. All items can also be ordered by calling toll free 1–877–433–7827.

For more information on ED's various activities, initiatives, publications, and partnerships related to school safety, see ED's Web site at http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/SDFS/edresp.html.

Model Programs

U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Justice

The model school safety programs that appear in this article represent a small sample of those identified under a U.S. Department of Justice grant to the Hamilton Fish National Institute on School and Community Violence, with assistance from the Vanderbilt Institute for Public Policy. The models in this article were randomly selected from 12 programs listed under the categories Aggression/Fighting and Bullying in the Model Programs section of the *Annual Report on School Safety, 1998.* (For more information on this publication, see Resources at the end of this article.) In addition, the listed models appear in random order.

The models have been designated as either "demonstrated" or "promising." Demonstrated models have been rigorously tested in the field and have solid evidence of their effectiveness. Promising models are well designed but have not yet been thoroughly tested.

Educators should keep in mind that the selection of a school safety program must be based on a thorough assessment of a given school's specific needs. Community stakeholders must also be involved in creating and implementing the program.

Aggression/Fighting

The Anger Coping Program, for middle schools, is a demonstrated model for select male students. The program consists of 18 weekly small-group sessions led by a school counselor and a mental health counselor during the school day. The lessons emphasize self-management and self-monitoring, understanding others' points of view, and social problem-solving skills. Aggressive boys who have completed the Anger Coping Program have been found to have lower rates of drug and alcohol involvement, higher levels of self-esteem, and stronger problem-solving skills than those who have not completed the program. *Program contact:* John E. Lochman, Ph.D., The University of Alabama, Department of Psychology, Box 870348, Tuscaloosa, AL 35487; Phone: 205–348–5083; Fax: 205–348–8648; E-mail: jlochman@gp.as.ua.edu

Positive Adolescent Choices Training (PACT), for middle and high schools, is a demonstrated model for high-risk African-American youth and other high-risk youth selected by teachers for conduct problems or histories of victimization. Using videotaped vignettes and role playing, students learn social skills such as giving and accepting positive and negative feedback, negotiating, problem solving, and resisting peer pressure. Rates of physical aggression at school and violence-related court charges are 50 percent lower among students who have completed PACT compared with those who have not. *Program contact:* Betty R. Yung, Ph.D., Director, Center for Child and Adolescent Violence Prevention, Wright State University, School of Professional Psychology, Ellis Human Development Institute, 9 North Edwin C. Moses Boulevard, Dayton, OH 45407; Phone: 937–775–4300; Fax: 937–775–4323; E-mail: betty.yung@wright.edu

PeaceBuilders®, for grades K–5, is a demonstrated model for students of mixed ethnicity that has been tested in urban and suburban elementary schools. PeaceBuilders should be viewed as a way of life rather than a program, because it attempts to change the characteristics of the school setting that trigger aggressive, hostile behavior. This program seeks to increase the availability of prosocial models to enhance social competence and decrease the frequency and intensity of aggressive behavior. Researchers found that this program improved students' social competence (especially when students had two years of exposure to the program) and curtailed expected increases in students' aggressive behavior. *Program contact:* Jane Gulibon, Heartsprings, Inc., P.O. Box 12158, Tucson, AZ 85732; Toll Free: 1–800–368–9356; Phone: 520–322–9977; Fax: 520–322–9983; E-mail: custrel@heartsprings.org; Web: http://www.peacebuilders.com

Bullying

Bully Proofing Your School, for elementary schools, is a comprehensive promising model. Components include staff involvement in deciding how to reduce bullying; a student curriculum that uses role playing, modeling, and class discussions; victim support that emphasizes enhancing self-esteem and social skills; an intervention for bullies that teaches anger control and empathy; and interaction with the parents of bullies and victims. The focus is on shifting power away from bullies, not on punishing them. No evaluation data are available. *Program contact:* Sally Stoker; Phone: 303–743–3670, ext. 8317

The Bullying Prevention Project, for elementary and middle schools, is a promising model that includes (1) help for school staff and parents in identifying and handling bullies and their victims, (2) classroom activities (such as role playing and creative writing) that generate discussions of bullying, and (3) schoolwide antibullying

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This article is adapted from *Annual Report on School Safety, 1998,* by the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Justice.

activities (including schoolwide reinforcement of positive behavior and sanctions for bullying). In addition, schoolwide rules against and sanctions for bullying are established. A preliminary evaluation has found promising results, and the program continues to be enhanced and tested. *The Blueprint on the Bullying Prevention Program* is available for $10 from the Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence, at 303–492–8465. *Program contact:* Susan P. Limber, Project Director, Bullying Prevention Project, Institute on Family and Neighborhood Life, 243 Poole Agricultural Center, Clemson University, Clemson, SC 29634–5205; E-mail: slimber@clemson.edu

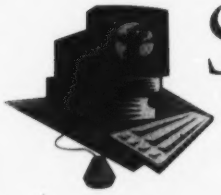
Source

U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Justice. 1998. *Annual Report on School Safety, 1998.* Washington, DC: Authors. (Available online at http://www.ed.gov/pubs/AnnSchoolRept98)

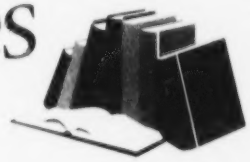
Resources

To find out more about model school safety programs that address aggression, bullying, family issues, gangs, racial conflicts, sexual harassment, substance abuse, truancy, vandalism, and weapons, see the *Annual Report on School Safety, 1998* (http://www.ed.gov/pubs/AnnSchoolRept98). Readers are also encouraged to see the *1999 Annual Report on School Safety* (http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/SDFS/news.html). The 1999 *Annual Report* contains programs intended to complement, not replace, those listed in the 1998 *Annual Report.* Free paper copies of both reports can be ordered from the U.S. Department of Education's Publications Center (ED Pubs) by calling toll free 1–877–433–7827 or by visiting the ED Pubs Web site at http://www.ed.gov/pubs/edpubs.html.

In addition, ED has convened the Expert Panel on Safe, Disciplined, and Drug-Free Schools to oversee a process for identifying and designating as promising and exemplary school-based programs that promote safe, disciplined, and drug-free schools. The expert panel expects to release its results in 2000. For the latest information, visit ED's Expert Panel Web site at http://www.ed.gov/offices/OERI/ORAD/KAD/expert_panel/drug-free.html.



School Safety Resources



Kevin Mitchell

This section offers a small sample of the many resources devoted to school safety and violence prevention. Entries include organizations, online federal publications, ERIC resources, and other federally sponsored resources.

Organizations

Center for the Prevention of School Violence (CPSV)
North Carolina State University
c/o Dr. Pamela L. Riley,
Executive Director
20 Enterprise Street, Suite 2
Raleigh, NC 27607–7375
Toll Free: 800–299–6054
Phone: 919–515–9397
Fax: 919–515–9561
Web: http://www.ncsu.edu/cpsv

CPSV serves as a clearinghouse for information on the problem of school violence. In addition to developing school violence prevention programs and conducting related research, CPSV maintains a resource library and responds to information requests. CPSV's Web site lists special projects, events, and publications related to school violence.

Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence (CSPV)
Institute of Behavioral Science
University of Colorado at Boulder
Campus Box 442
Boulder, CO 80309–0442
Phone: 303–492–8465
Fax: 303–443–3297
E-mail: cspv@colorado.edu
Web: http://www.colorado.edu/cspv

CSPV provides assistance to groups that are committed to understanding and preventing violence, particularly adolescent violence. It conducts research on the causes of violence and on the efficacy of prevention and intervention programs, collects related literature, offers technical assistance on the evaluation and development of violence prevention programs, and provides direct information services to the public through access to customized databases that can be searched by topic area. CSPV's Web site includes information on model prevention programs and links to databases of violence-related information.

Kevin Mitchell is Co-Editor of *The ERIC Review* and a writer/editor for ACCESS ERIC in Rockville, Maryland.

Children's Safety Network (CSN)
National Injury and Violence Prevention Resource Center
Education Development Center, Inc.
55 Chapel Street
Newton, MA 02458–1060
Phone: 617–969–7101, ext. 2207
Fax: 617–244–3436
E-mail: csn@edc.org
Web: http://www.edc.org/HHD/csn/index.html

CSN provides resources and technical assistance to maternal and child health agencies and other organizations seeking to reduce unintentional injuries and violence to children and adolescents. CSN's Web site includes a variety of resources on school safety and violence prevention, as well as links to other injury prevention Web sites.

Conflict Resolution Education Network (CREnet)
1527 New Hampshire Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20036
Phone: 202–667–9700
Fax: 202–667–8629
E-mail: nidr@crenet.org
Web: http://www.crenet.org

CREnet (formerly the National Institute for Dispute Resolution and the National Association for Mediation in Education) is the primary national and international clearinghouse for information, resources, and technical assistance in the field of conflict resolution education. It promotes the development, implementation, and institutionalization of school- and university-based conflict resolution programs and curricula. CREnet's Web site includes a list of conflict resolution programs and practitioners.

Girls Incorporated National Headquarters
120 Wall Street, Third Floor
New York, NY 10005
Phone: 212–509–2000
Fax: 212–509–8708
E-mail: girlsincorporated@girls-inc.org
Web: http://www.girlsinc.org

Girls Incorporated is a national youth organization dedicated to helping every girl become strong, smart, and bold. Girls Incorporated develops research-based informal education programs that encourage girls to take risks and master physical, intellectual, and emotional challenges. Major programs address math and science education, pregnancy prevention, media literacy, adolescent health, substance-abuse prevention, and sports participation.

Institute on Violence and Destructive Behavior (IVDB)
1265 University of Oregon
Eugene, OR 97403–1265
Phone: 541–346–3592
E-mail: ivdb@darkwing.uoregon.edu
Web: http://interact.uoregon.edu/ivdb/ivdb.html

IVDB studies the conditions and factors relating to the development and prevention of violence among children and adolescents. In addition, IVDB provides training and technical assistance to schools, families, and community members. IVDB's Web site includes information on projects and grants, outreach and prevention programs, and school safety planning.

National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS)
P.O. Box 6000
Rockville, MD 20849–6000
Toll Free: 800–851–3420
Phone: 301–519–5500
TTY: 877–712–9279
E-mail: askncjrs@ncjrs.org
Web: http://www.ncjrs.org

NCJRS is one of the most extensive sources of information on criminal and juvenile justice in the world, providing services to an international community of policymakers and professionals. Funded by the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), NCJRS maintains an online database of abstracts of more than 145,000 criminal justice books, journal articles, and reports published by DOJ; local, state, and other federal government agencies; international organizations; and the private sector.

National Resource Center for Safe Schools (NRCSS)
Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory
101 SW Main, Suite 500
Portland, OR 97204
Toll Free: 800–268–2275
Phone: 503–275–0131
Fax: 503–275–0444
E-mail: safeschools@nwrel.org
Web: http://www.safetyzone.org

NRCSS, which is funded by the U.S. Department of Education, works with schools, communities, state and local education agencies, and other concerned individuals and agencies to create safe learning environments and prevent school violence. Visitors to the NRCSS Web site can access a resource database, review promising programs, and request copies of publications related to school safety planning, violence prevention, conflict resolution, and substance-abuse prevention.

National School Safety Center (NSSC)
141 Duesenberg Drive, Suite 11
Westlake Village, CA 91362
Phone: 805–373–9977
Fax: 805–373–9277
E-mail: info@nssc1.org
Web: http://www.nssc1.org

NSSC advocates for the prevention of school crime and violence by providing information and resources and identifying strategies and promising programs that support safe schools worldwide. NSSC's Web site includes descriptions of related publications, products, services, training, seminars, and resources for parents and educators.

National Youth Gang Center (NYGC)
Institute for Intergovernmental Research
P.O. Box 12729
Tallahassee, FL 32317
Phone: 850–385–0600
Fax: 850–386–5356
E-mail: nygc@iir.com
Web: http://www.iir.com/nygc

NYGC works to increase and maintain the body of knowledge on youth gangs and effective responses to them. It assists state and local jurisdictions in the collection, analysis, and exchange of information on gang-related demographics, legislation, literature, research, and promising program strategies. It also coordinates the activities of the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Youth Gang Consortium.

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP)
U.S. Department of Justice
810 Seventh Street, NW
Washington, DC 20531
Phone: 202–307–5911
Fax: 202–307–2093
E-mail: askjj@ojp.usdoj.gov
Web: http://ojjdp.ncjrs.org

OJJDP provides national leadership, coordination, and resources to develop, implement, and support effective methods to prevent juvenile victimization and to respond appropriately to juvenile delinquency. OJJDP's Web site lists related grants, publications, and links to other OJJDP programs.

Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program (SDFSP)
U.S. Department of Education
Portals Building
600 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202
E-mail: safeschl@ed.gov
Web: http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/SDFS

SDFSP is the federal government's primary vehicle for reducing drug, alcohol, and tobacco use, as well as violence, through education and prevention activities in the schools. SDFSP's Web site includes related information on publications, grants, research, and model programs.

Online Federal Publications

The publications listed below can be viewed and downloaded online. Free paper copies can be ordered from ED Pubs, the U.S. Department of Education's Publications Center, by visiting the Web site at http://www.ed.gov/pubs/edpubs.html or by calling toll free 1–877–433–7827.

1999 Annual Report on School Safety
http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/SDFS/news.html

Annual Report on School Safety, 1998
http://www.ed.gov/pubs/AnnSchoolRept98

Creating Safe and Drug-Free Schools: An Action Guide
http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/SDFS/actguid/index.html

Early Warning, Timely Response: A Guide to Safe Schools
http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/OSEP/earlywrn.html

Indicators of School Crime and Safety, 1998
http://nces.ed.gov/pubs98/safety

Keeping Schools Open As Community Learning Centers: Extending Learning in a Safe, Drug-Free Environment Before and After School
http://www.ed.gov/pubs/LearnCenters

Manual To Combat Truancy
http://www.ed.gov/pubs/Truancy

Preventing Youth Hate Crime: A Manual for Schools and Communities
http://www.ed.gov/pubs/HateCrime/start.html

Violence and Discipline Problems in U.S. Public Schools: 1996–97
http://nces.ed.gov/pubs98/violence/index.html

ERIC Resources

ERIC is the U.S. Department of Education's nationwide information network that provides ready access to education literature. The ERIC system centers on the world's largest education database, which contains a wealth of information on school safety, violence prevention, and other topics. The database can be searched online and in many libraries. For general information about ERIC, contact ACCESS ERIC, the reference and referral component of the ERIC system.

ACCESS ERIC
Toll Free: 800–LET–ERIC (538–3742)
Phone: 301–519–5157
Fax: 301–519–6760
E-mail: accesseric@accesseric.org
Web: http://www.accesseric.org

In addition, the clearinghouses listed below offer specific information on topics related to school safety and violence prevention.

ERIC Clearinghouse on Counseling and Student Services
Toll Free: 800–414–9769
Phone: 336–334–4114
E-mail: ericcass@uncg.edu
Web: http://www.uncg.edu/edu/ericcass

ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management
Toll Free: 800–438–8841
Phone: 541–346–5043
E-mail: ppiele@oregon.uoregon.edu
Web: http://eric.uoregon.edu

ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education
Toll Free: 800–601–4868
Phone: 212–678–3433
E-mail: eric-cue@columbia.edu
Web: http://eric-web.tc.columbia.edu

National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities (Affiliate ERIC Clearinghouse)
Toll Free: 888–552–0624
Phone: 202–289–7800
E-mail: ncef@nibs.org
Web: http://www.edfacilities.org

Other Federally Sponsored Resources

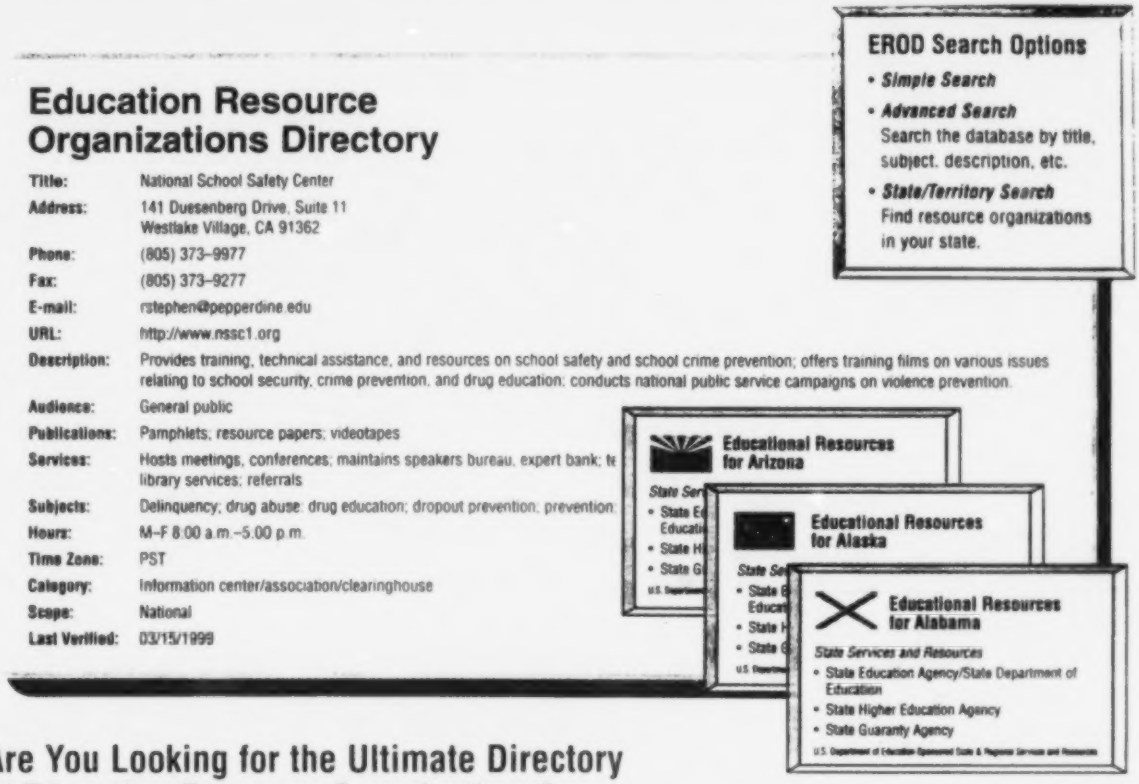
Partnerships Against Violence Network (PAVNET) Online
http://www.pavnet.org

PAVNET Online is a virtual library of information on violence and at-risk youth. It contains data from seven federal agencies, including the U.S. Department of Education, the U.S. Department of Justice, and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

ERIC Clearinghouse on Counseling and Student Services (ERIC/CASS) Virtual Library
http://www.uncg.edu/edu/ericcass/libhome.htm

The ERIC/CASS virtual library is an online collection of full-text materials on education topics of current interest, including school violence and bullying. The virtual library contains extensive resources for parents, teachers, students, administrators, community members, and others interested in education issues.

The Education World at Your Fingertips!


EROD Search Options
• Simple Search
• Advanced Search
Search the database by title, subject, description, etc.
• State/Territory Search
Find resource organizations in your state.
Education Resource Organizations Directory
Title: National School Safety Center
Address: 141 Duesenberg Drive, Suite 11
Westlake Village, CA 91362
Phone: (805) 373–9977
Fax: (805) 373–9277
E-mail: rstephen@pepperdine.edu
URL: http://www.nssc1.org
Description: Provides training, technical assistance, and resources on school safety and school crime prevention; offers training films on various issues relating to school security, crime prevention, and drug education; conducts national public service campaigns on violence prevention.
Audience: General public
Publications: Pamphlets; resource papers; videotapes
Services: Hosts meetings, conferences; maintains speakers bureau, expert bank; t
library services; referrals
Subjects: Delinquency; drug abuse; drug education; dropout prevention; prevention
Hours: M–F 8:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.
Time Zone: PST
Category: Information center/association/clearinghouse
Scope: National
Last Verified: 03/15/1999
Educational Resources for Arizona
Educational Resources for Alaska
Educational Resources for Alabama
State Services and Resources
• State Education Agency/State Department of Education
• State Higher Education Agency
• State Guaranty Agency

Are You Looking for the Ultimate Directory of Education Resource Organizations?

The Education Resource Organizations Directory (EROD) helps you identify organizations that provide information and assistance on a broad range of education-related topics. EROD currently contains information on more than 2,400 national, regional, and state organizations, and the number of entries continues to grow. And best of all, EROD is on the Web, so you can search it any time you like.

Searching EROD Is Fast, Easy, and Free!

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- Perform simple or advanced searches.
- Enjoy free online access—no fees, no accounts, no passwords.

EROD Web Site
http://www.ed.gov/Programs/EROD

Questions? Call
1–800–538–3742

Visit the EROD Web site today at http://www.ed.gov/Programs/EROD

EROD

EROD is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education's National Library of Education.

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Searching the ERIC Database on School Safety and Related Topics

Kevin Mitchell

The ERIC database is the world's largest education database and an excellent resource for anyone seeking information on school safety and related topics. ERIC maintains abstracts of nearly 1 million research reports, curriculum and teaching guides, conference papers, and journal articles dating from 1966 to the present. You can search the ERIC database online through the ERIC systemwide Web site at http://www.accesseric.org or through print indexes and CD-ROMs at hundreds of libraries, college and university campuses, and state and local education offices.

An ERIC search on a specific topic results in an annotated bibliography of related journal and document literature. You can then select the titles of interest and read the accompanying abstracts. To get the full text of a journal article (shown as EJ followed by six digits), visit a university library or a large public library or contact a journal article reprint service such as The UnCover Company (1–800–787–7979) or the Institute for Scientific Information Document Solution (1–800–336–4474).

To get the full text of a document (shown as ED followed by six digits), visit one of the more than 1,000 libraries around the world that maintain an ERIC microfiche collection. To find the library nearest you, call ACCESS ERIC at 1–800–538–3742. You can also order a print copy from the ERIC Document Reproduction Service at 1–800–443–3742. In addition, many documents published after 1992 can be ordered and delivered via the Internet at http://edrs.com.

Each entry in the ERIC database has been indexed with *descriptors*, which are special terms that describe the most important concepts contained in a journal article or document. Although you can search the database using regular words and phrases, your search will be far more effective if you use ERIC descriptors.

When searching the database for information on school safety and related topics, begin with the following descriptors:

- *School Safety*
- *Aggression*
- *Bullying*
- *Violence*

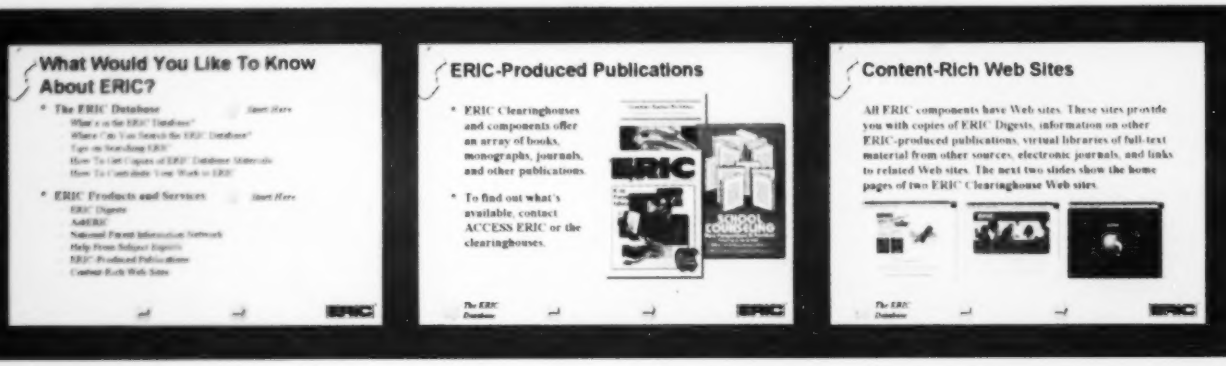
Other related descriptors include the following:

- *Antisocial Behavior*
- *Behavior Problems*
- *Delinquency*
- *Delinquency Prevention*
- *Discipline Problems*
- *School Security*
- *Security Personnel*
- *Stealing*
- *Student Behavior*
- *Weapons*

If you require assistance in searching the ERIC database for information on school safety and related topics, call the ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education at 1–800–601–4868. If you search extensively on a regular basis, you may find the *Thesaurus of ERIC Descriptors* helpful. To access the *Thesaurus* online, go to the ERIC Clearinghouse on Assessment and Evaluation Web site at http://ericae.net/scripts/ewiz. You can use the site's ERIC Search Wizard to select appropriate terms, which can then be used to search the ERIC database at http://www.accesseric.org. Paper copies of the *Thesaurus* are available from Oryx Press (1–800–279–6799) and at most places that offer access to the ERIC database. For general information about accessing the database or for a free copy of the brochure *All About ERIC*, call ACCESS ERIC at 1–800–538–3742. ■

Kevin Mitchell is Co-Editor of *The ERIC Review* and a writer/editor for ACCESS ERIC in Rockville, Maryland.

ERIC® Slide Show


What Would You Like To Know About ERIC?
ERIC Products and Services
ERIC-Produced Publications
ERIC Clearinghouses and components offer an array of books, monographs, journals, and other publications.
To find out what's available, contact ACCESS ERIC or the clearinghouses.
Content-Rich Web Sites
All ERIC components have Web sites. These sites provide you with copies of ERIC Digests, information on other ERIC-produced publications, virtual libraries of full-text material from other sources, electronic journals, and links to related Web sites. The next two slides show the home pages of two ERIC Clearinghouse Web sites.

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Now there's a ***fast***, ***free***, and ***easy*** way to learn about **ERIC!** Check out the **ERIC Slide Show.** You can view the presentation on the Web or download it in Microsoft PowerPoint.

The slide show, like **ERIC**, is for teachers, parents, students, administrators, librarians—anyone interested in education.

In just a few minutes, you can

- Learn how to use the **ERIC** database—the world's largest database of education information.
- Discover **ERIC's** other products and services, including
  - Tips for parents and families.
  - Lesson plans for teachers.
- Learn about **AskERIC**—an e-mail service that will answer your education-related questions.

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You can use the ERIC Slide Show for a presentation or workshop. Here's how:

1. **Go to www.accesseric.org/resources/eric_slides.html.**
2. **Download the slides in Microsoft PowerPoint (Version 4.0 or Windows97).**
3. **Print out the script.**
4. **Use it to teach others about ERIC!**

Questions? Call ACCESS ERIC at 1-800-538-3742.

The Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) is funded by the U.S. Department of Education and administered by the National Library of Education.

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Putting It All Together: An Action Plan

U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Justice

The articles in this publication highlight the important role that school safety plays in the lives of children. The following action plan summarizes the steps that parents, educators, business and community leaders, and students can take to create safer schools. Many of the ideas listed are discussed in more detail in the *Annual Report on School Safety, 1998* (available online at http://www.ed.gov/pubs/AnnSchoolRept98).

Parents

- Take an active role in your children's education. Make sure that your children do their homework and attend class. Get to know teachers and administrators.
- Listen to and talk with your children regularly, because everyday conversations create opportunities to teach children social, problem-solving, and anger management skills.
- Act as role models. Settle your own conflicts peaceably, and manage your own anger without violence.
- Establish clear rules of behavior, and discipline your children consistently. Discuss behaviors, punishments, and rewards with your children.
- Make it clear to your children that you support school policies and that you do not tolerate violent behavior.
- Discourage your children from name-calling, teasing, and other forms of bullying.
- Keep guns and other weapons out of reach of unsupervised children. Ensure that firearms are locked away, well secured, and stored separately from ammunition.
- Insist on knowing your children's friends, whereabouts, and activities.
- Work with other parents to develop standards for school-related events and activities, and ensure that there is adult supervision at these events and activities.
- Join with other parents through school, neighborhood, civic, or religious organizations to talk about concerns regarding youth and violence in your community.

Educators

- Assess the school's security needs. Enlist school security professionals in designing and maintaining a school security system.

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- Implement schoolwide education and training on safety and violence prevention.
- Actively involve students in making decisions about school policies and programs.
- Design and consistently enforce a clear, effective discipline policy and other school policies that support and reward prosocial behavior.

This article is adapted from *Annual Report on School Safety, 1998*, by the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Justice.

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- Devise a system for reporting and analyzing incidents that violate school policies.
- Monitor the school to ensure that it is clean and safe.
- Create a climate of tolerance. Ensure that all students are respected and treated equally, regardless of ethnicity, race, religion, sex, socioeconomic status, or other characteristics.
- Provide appropriate educational and crisis-response services to all students, including access to school psychologists and counselors.
- Use alternative schools to educate violent students.
- Prepare an annual report on school crime and safety, and distribute it to school staff, parents, students, and other members of the community. Let them know how safe the school is and what progress has been made in making the school safer.
- Build partnerships with the business community and local law enforcement agencies.

Business and Community Leaders

- Adopt a local school by becoming more familiar with and addressing its needs in the context of the community. Develop an awareness of what works in reducing violence in the school, and build on past successes.
- Provide students with training in basic job skills because the social skills commonly used in the work setting are similar to those required to prevent violence in the school setting.
- Provide students with employment opportunities—including internships, school-to-work programs, summer jobs, and afterschool jobs—to help prevent and reduce criminal behavior.
- Provide scholarships and other incentives to deserving students.
- Sponsor extracurricular social and cultural activities and other positive activities for students.
- Offer resources to local schools, including programs, services, facilities for events, strategic planning, and equipment.
- Support working parents by providing them with flex-time scheduling opportunities. Encourage parents to attend parent-teacher conferences, field trips, meetings, mentoring sessions, and other school activities to strengthen their children's education.

Students

- Resolve problems and disputes nonviolently.
- Refrain from teasing, name-calling, and other forms of bullying.
- Respect all students, school staff, and family members.
- Know and follow school rules.
- Report crimes and threats of violence to school officials.
- Get involved in the development and implementation of anticrime programs at school.
- Learn how to avoid becoming a victim.
- Seek help from trusted adults when confronting difficult problems.

Source

U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Justice. 1998. *Annual Report on School Safety, 1998.* Washington, DC: Authors. (Available online at http://www.ed.gov/pubs/AnnSchoolRept98)

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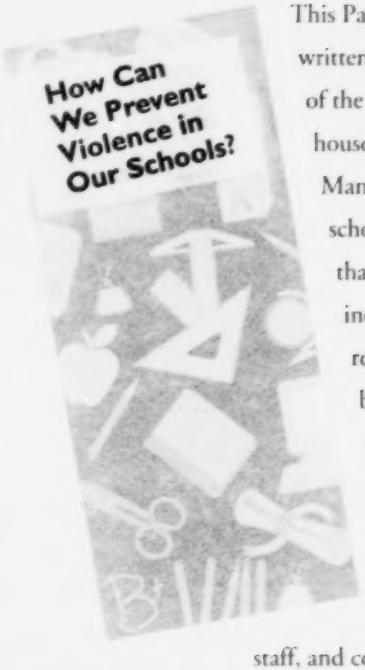
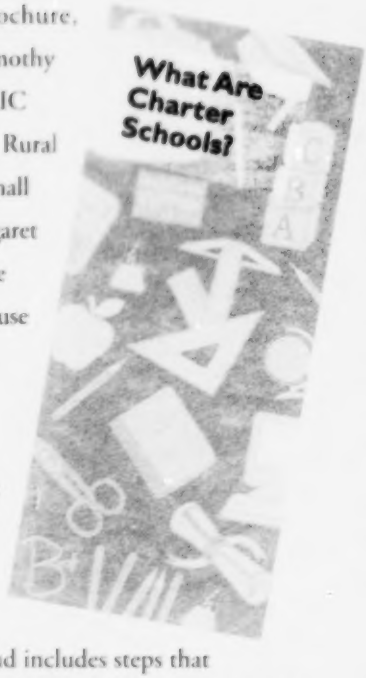
ACCESS ERIC Announces Two New Parent Brochures!



This Parent Brochure, written by Linda Lumsden of the ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management, discusses school characteristics that can lead to violent incidents, risk factors related to violent behavior, and strategies that schools are using to prevent school violence. Resources that parents, school staff, and community members can use to get more information on school violence are also included.



This Parent Brochure, co-written by Timothy Collins of the ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools and Margaret Hadderman of the ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management, describes the origin and nature of, as well as arguments for and against, charter schools and includes steps that parents can take to help bring a charter school to their community.

Quantities are limited, so don't delay.

Call ACCESS ERIC now at 1-800-LET-ERIC (538-3742) to get your free copies!

You may also order by:
Fax: 301-519-6760
E-mail: accesseric@accesseric.org

Read all the Parent Brochures online at the ACCESS ERIC Web site:
http://www.accesseric.org/resources/parent/parent.html

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ERIC Directory

Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)
National Library of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
U.S. Department of Education
Toll Free: (800) 424–1616
TTY/TDD: (800) 437–0833
Web: http://www.ed.gov

Clearinghouses

Adult, Career, and Vocational Education
Ohio State University
Toll Free: (800) 848–4815, ext. 2–8625
Phone: (614) 292–7069
TTY/TDD: (614) 688–8734
Web: http://ericacve.org

Assessment and Evaluation
University of Maryland, College Park
Toll Free: (800) GO4–ERIC (464–3742)
Phone: (301) 405–7449
Web: http://ericae.net

Community Colleges
University of California at Los Angeles
Toll Free: (800) 832–8256
Phone: (310) 825–3931
Web: http://www.gseis.ucla.edu/ERIC/eric.html

Counseling and Student Services
University of North Carolina at Greensboro
Toll Free: (800) 414–9769
Phone: (336) 334–4114
Web: http://www.uncg.edu/edu/ericcass

Disabilities and Gifted Education
Council for Exceptional Children
Toll Free: (800) 328–0272
Phone: (703) 264–9475
TTY/TDD: (800) 328–0272
Web: http://ericec.org

Educational Management
University of Oregon
Toll Free: (800) 438–8841
Phone: (541) 346–5043
Web: http://eric.uoregon.edu

Elementary and Early Childhood Education
University of Illinois at Urbana—Champaign
Toll Free: (800) 583–4135
Phone: (217) 333–1386
TTY/TDD: (800) 583–4135
Web: http://ericeece.org
National Parent Information Network Web: http://npin.org

Higher Education
George Washington University
Toll Free: (800) 773–ERIC (3742)
Phone: (202) 296–2597
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Languages and Linguistics
Center for Applied Linguistics
Toll Free: (800) 276–9834
Phone: (202) 362–0700
Web: http://www.cal.org/ericcll

Reading, English, and Communication
Indiana University
Toll Free: (800) 759–4723
Phone: (812) 855–5847
Web: http://www.indiana.edu/~eric_rec

Rural Education and Small Schools
AEL, Inc.
Toll Free: (800) 624–9120
Phone: (304) 347–0400
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Web: http://www.ael.org/eric

Science, Mathematics, and Environmental Education
Ohio State University
Toll Free: (800) 276–0462
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Web: http://www.ericse.org

Social Studies/Social Science Education
Indiana University
Toll Free: (800) 266–3815
Phone: (812) 855–3838
Web: http://www.indiana.edu/~ssdc/eric_chess.htm

Teaching and Teacher Education
American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education
Toll Free: (800) 822–9229
Phone: (202) 293–2450
Web: http://www.ericsp.org

Urban Education
Teachers College, Columbia University
Toll Free: (800) 601–4868
Phone: (212) 678–3433
Web: http://eric-web.tc.columbia.edu

Adjunct Clearinghouses

Child Care
National Child Care Information Center
Toll Free: (800) 616–2242
TTY/TDD: (800) 516–2242
Web: http://nccic.org

Clinical Schools
American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education
Toll Free: (800) 822–9229
Phone: (202) 293–2450
Web: http://www.aacte.org/menu2.html

Consumer Education
National Institute for Consumer Education
Phone: (734) 487–2292
Web: http://www.nice.emich.edu

Educational Opportunity
National TRIO Clearinghouse
Council for Opportunity in Education
Phone: (202) 347–2218
Web: http://www.trioprograms.org

Entrepreneurship Education
Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership
Toll Free: (888) 4–CELCEE (423–5233)
Phone: (310) 206–9549
Web: http://www.celcee.edu

ESL Literacy Education
Center for Applied Linguistics
Phone: (202) 362–0700, ext. 200
Web: http://www.cal.org/ncle

International Civic Education
Indiana University
Toll Free: (800) 266–3815
Phone: (812) 855–3838

Postsecondary Education and the Internet
University of Virginia
Phone: (804) 924–3880
Web: http://highered.org

School Counseling Services
University of North Texas
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Web: http://www.coe.unt.edu/cdhe/eric.htm

Service Learning
University of Minnesota
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Phone: (612) 625–6276
Web: http://umn.edu/~serve

Test Collection
Educational Testing Service
Phone: (609) 734–5689
Web: http://ericae.net/testcol.htm

U.S.–Japan Studies
Indiana University
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Web: http://www.indiana.edu/~japan

Affiliate Clearinghouse

National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities
National Institute of Building Sciences
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